

*A Valid Religion
for the Times*

PARLEY P. WOMER



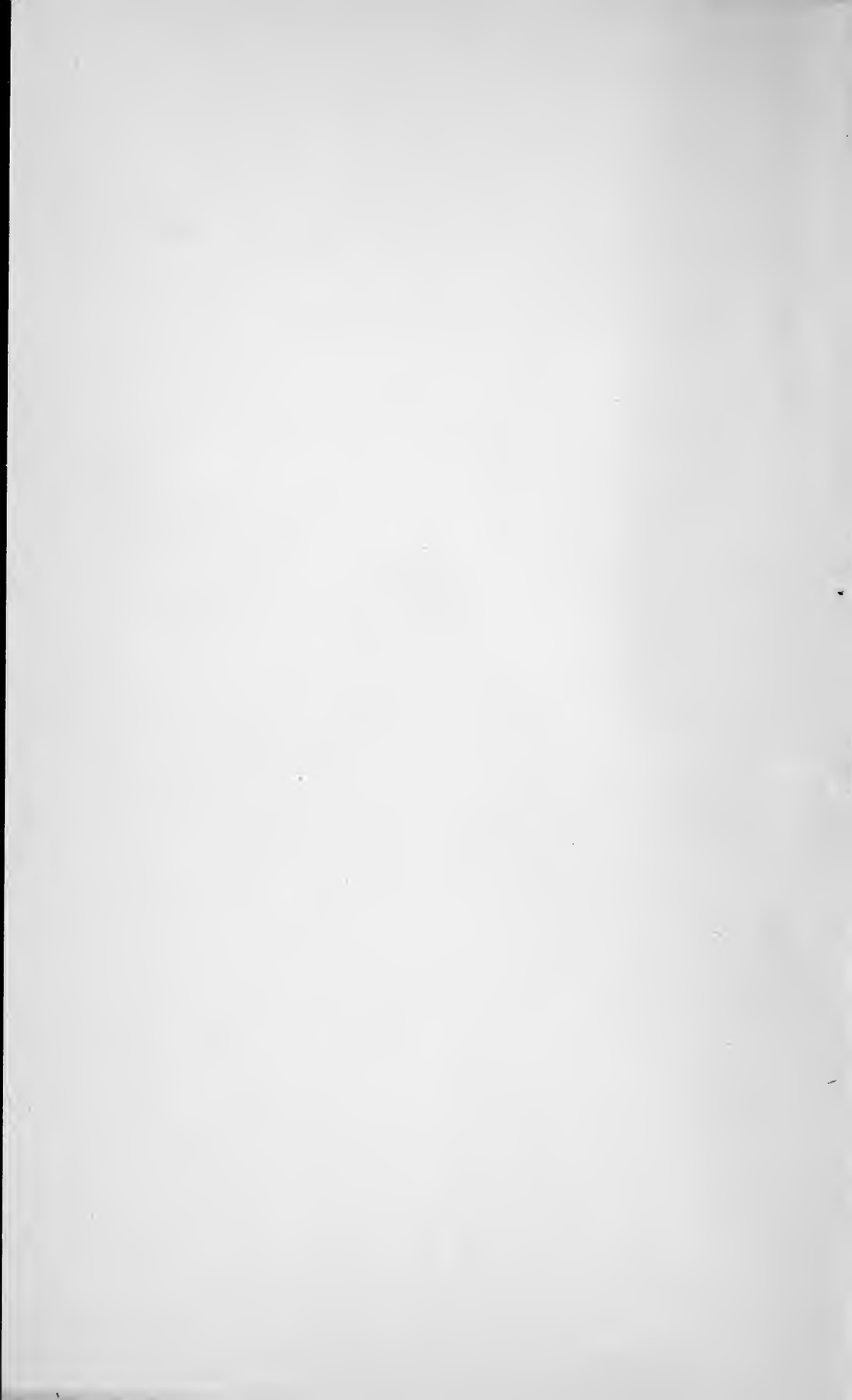
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A Valid Religion for the Times

*A Study of the Central Truths of
Spiritual Religion.*

BY

PARLEY P. WOMER,

Author of "The Relation of Healing to Law."

WITH A FOREWORD BY

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.



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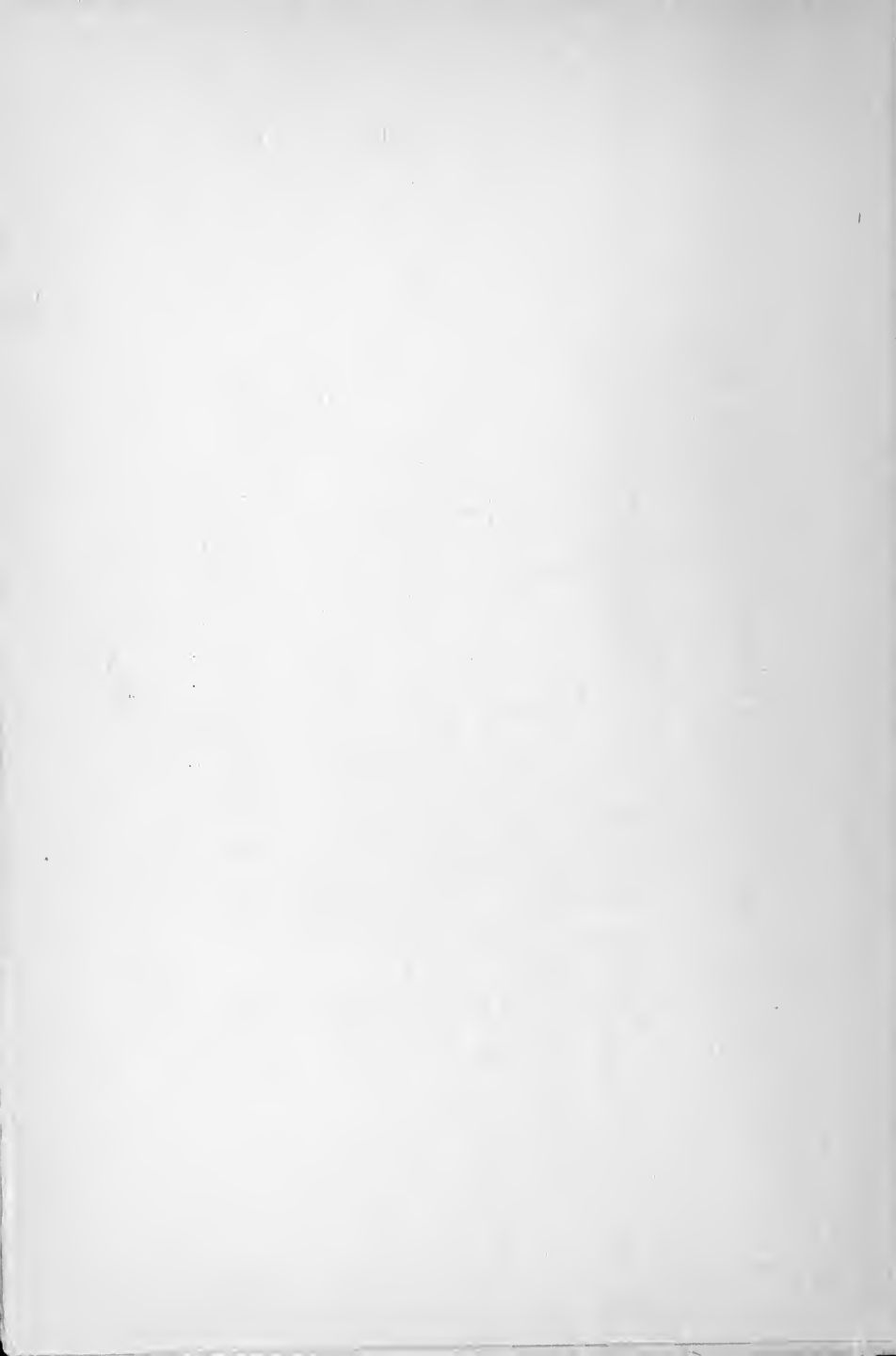
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*In memory of a conversation that has had
many happy issues both for ourselves
and for others, this book is respect-
fully dedicated to*

DR. C. EUGENE RIGGS, MRS. RIGGS,
and
MR. HENRY E. SMITH.



PREFACE.

THE searching criticism to which all Christian teaching has been subjected in recent years was sorely needed in the interest of a purer and more rational faith. Now that its work in the main is accomplished, and its intensity has begun to abate we are confronted with the task of dealing properly with the message of truth that is left. This must be gathered up and restated in terms of our daily life and need. Many worthy attempts in this direction have been made, but these for the most part are beyond the reach of the busy, practical people who in nearly every community comprise the vast majority of those who follow Christ. Busied with a thousand duties and demands of daily life there are many who have neither the time nor the equipment to follow the processes by which the trained thinker obtains his results, and yet they are profoundly interested in those results. They are asking what of the evangel has withstood the searching tests that have been applied.

It is the standpoint of these that I have had in mind in the preparation of these pages rather

than that of the scholar or the philosopher. It has not occurred to me that the presentation herein made has anything especially new or original about it, because in fact I have laid a great many writers under tribute, but it represents a point of view that has brought immeasurable satisfaction and uplift to myself and I am not without hope that it may help in some small way to meet the general need.

I am very greatly indebted to Dr. Gladden for so kindly taking the time out of his busy life to look over the manuscript, and to contribute a foreword. A still greater debt, however, that I owe him, and one that I would acknowledge with deep gratitude is the inspiration that I have drawn from his published writings, and which more than any other influence has helped to clarify my own ideas and enabled me to grasp in some measure the fundamental truths of spiritual religion.

PARLEY P. WOMER.

PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
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FOREWORD

I have read, more hastily than I wished to read, the chapters of this little book, and have found myself gladly assenting, all the way, to the truth here set forth. The spirit of the book is that of sweet reasonableness; it is not a polemic; it is simply and calmly affirmative; it assumes that the truth is its own best evidence, and that it only needs to be distinctly spoken.

In every chapter we find evidence that the author has been reading widely and judiciously, that he understands what he has read, and that he has verified, by his own insight and experience the truth he is trying to teach. The realities of the spiritual life are approached in unconventional ways, but we are helped to see that they are realities. How carefully, in the first chapter, are the discriminations drawn between the counter-

feit and the real spiritual-mindedness; and how plain is it made to appear that that rather formidable phrase describes an experience which is as simple and natural as delight in a landscape or the love of little children!

It is pleasant to believe, as I do most heartily believe, that the type of teaching of which this book is a good example is becoming increasingly prevalent among the younger ministers of the American pulpit. Such theological teachers as Henry Churchill King and William Newton Clark and George B. Stevens and William Adams Brown and George Hodges—to name but a few out of many—have been putting their own large, free, constructive spirit into the students whom they have been sending forth and we are beginning to reap the fruits of their labors. The output of our theological seminaries has been somewhat reduced, of late, numerically; but the quality has been improving.

The author of this little book has proved

himself to be a capable and inspiring leader of men. First in a strong church in Central New York, and now in one of the important churches of the North-western metropolis, he has won a cordial hearing and a faithful following. These pages should make him known to a larger audience. They will easily believe that he is a man of kindly temper, of wide sympathy, of independent judgment and of clear and high purpose.

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

Columbus, March 15, 1910.

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To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.—PAUL.

Where there is no vision the people perish.—
PROVERBS.

We believe that the Spirit breaths upon every heart of man, and that each receives according to his capacity. The spirit broods over the chaos of the densest and most confused souls. Consequently every man has in him the roots and rudiments of these Divine gifts. And the one supreme business of his education is to evoke and develop these gifts.—BISHOP CHARLES D. WILLIAMS.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SPIRITUAL MIND.

THE statement of the New Testament that to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, is one of those affirmatives which burn themselves indelibly into the consciousness and when once heard can never afterwards be forgotten. We feel instinctively that a great distinction has been struck. "To be carnally minded." "To be spiritually minded." There is a measureless gulf that lies between the two; it is the gulf that lies between life and death, and between heaven and hell.

Manifestly there is a great human reality contained here which it is of the utmost consequence to understand. To grasp the meaning of this reality for one's self and one's age and to get at precisely the set and attitude of the soul that the Apostle's words imply is a task that may well

engage our best thought and effort through the years, for the solution of the world's riddle, the explanation of life's sorrow and loss, and the secret of life's strength and victory are to be found here.

Men sometimes shrink from the investigation of these deeper realities of the soul out of fear that they will be disturbed, and come into questionings and uncertainties which it is easier and pleasanter to avoid. There is need to reflect that disturbance may sometimes be God's way and, therefore, the only way of rescuing the soul from an attitude toward the spiritual order that is essentially death, and of bringing an attitude that is life and peace. In the parable of Jesus, the woman who had lost a coin, a precious heirloom, is represented as lighting a candle and sweeping the house and searching diligently until she found it. In this Eastern house the sweeping consisted in tearing up the rushes which covered the clay floor, and in gathering together and sifting the dust that lay beneath. Thus the treasure of spiritual life may be obscured by the false conceptions and standards which exist; and there must be disturbance, the mind must come into questionings, and the conscience must be aroused in order that the treasure that is lost may be found. Men who are

fearful of every new truth that is proposed, as if the worst thing that could happen was some fresh outlook of the mind, and who scarcely dare to think lest they be disturbed, have need to be reminded that inertia of soul is not rest, satiety is not content, and stagnation is not peace.

To get at the truth of this subject for our own time we have at the outset to work through and to set aside the strange and morbid conceptions of the spiritual that from time to time have been held; but which, owing to the larger outlook that has been obtained, are beginning at last to disappear. There is to begin with, the conception that has identified it with the ascetic ideal. In every generation the ascetic, with his austere views of life and his rigid self-repression, has appeared. Under this influence the arts and sciences have been at times tabooed, all the interests of ordinary life have been set down as godless secularities, religious worship, meditation, psalm singing, and supplication have been regarded as the only really spiritual pursuits. It is doubtless true that the protest of asceticism has been to some extent a restraining influence in society, and has helped to provoke a more spiritual temper in men at large, but its prevailing tendency has ever been to caricature the spiritual life and to make it repellent to the thinking mind.

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It is said that Erasmus, the famous scholar of the Reformation period, once declared that there were those in his time who thought themselves spiritual because they did not wash themselves, and who regarded it as a peculiar mark of sanctity that they could not read. That was merely his way of pouring ridicule upon the idea that the spiritual life consists in the suppression of certain powers and faculties of our God-given nature, and in the shutting of ourselves out from certain large spheres of human thought and life.

There, too, is the conception of the spiritual mind that has identified it with a certain persuasion, or with great devoutness in worship, and this while permitting the most amazing license of conduct. A conspicuous example of this temper is the case of Cellini, a sixteenth century artist of note, concerning whom it is said that his favorite pastime was reading the New Testament, that he was especially fond of Paul's Epistles, and was able to comment upon the Evangelists with angelic fervor, and arising from his devotions he would turn with equal ardor to his amours and murders. There is also the case of Charles IX. of France, who on Black Bartholomew's Day is reported to have spent nine hours in prayer, and going from the place of worship he gave the order that issued in the most atro-

cious massacre of history. To these may be added the case of a famous churchman, who is declared by one writer to have been "Mean, cruel, avaricious, and dishonorable, but exceedingly religious, confidently believing that his footsteps were guarded by the blessed angels."* This is the conception of the spiritual in character that identifies it with a certain persuasion, with ecstasy of feeling, or with great devoutness of worship, while permitting the most amazing laxity in the ordinary round of conduct.

There is finally the interpretation that has confused the spiritual in character with certain morbid states. It is said, for example, of a great historic figure noted for his saintliness, that every time he ate a meal he was accustomed to engage in a painful self-examination, and to ask himself whether he was eating to sustain life or whether it was because he was fond of eating, and if his scrutiny seemed to show that he was eating for any other reason than to live, he was cast down in spirit, his soul was filled with sorrow, and he would stigmatize himself as carnal. Not a few have gained the reputation of being spiritual simply upon the strength of their emotional qualities, or from their ability, as some one has declared, "to put tears into their voice." At

* Dr, Washington Gladden.

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times even the outward appearance, a pose of the features, a pair of dreamy eyes, or a "nasal twang," has been sufficient ground for the reputation of great spirituality.

The trouble seems to be that the reality involved in this Pauline expression is something infinitely greater than has been realized. It is something that includes the whole of life and not simply a part; that embraces all the faculties and powers and not merely a particular set of them; that covers the whole of man's experience and not simply a segment. Spirituality is normality. Holiness is wholeness. Saintliness is healthiness. Spiritual mindedness is wholesome mindedness. "Not suppression, but fruition," as some one has put it, is the true ideal. To be able to see God in every part of his world, in every phase of experience, in every call of duty, in every sphere of action, in every cry of human need, and to respond with the whole nature to every thrill of the Divine, to let every faculty effulge touched with celestial fire, and nothing less than that is what is really meant by this Pauline conception of the spiritual mind.

"To be spiritual," says a truly noble writer, "is to be able to see God in the best of everything, in a sunset touch, in a sonata of Beethoven, in a painting of Murillo, in the movements of con-

science, in the progress of history, in the laughter of little children, in the facts of one's own experience, in the questionings of one's own heart, in the higher aspirations of one's own soul, and to be able to feel that the best of everything is God.' It is to be able to say with the poet—

"Are not these, O Soul, the vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the vision He, tho' He be not that which He seems?

Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

* * *

Dark is the world to Thee; thyself art the reason why;

For is He not all but thou, that hath power to feel 'I am I?'

* * *

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see,

*But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?"**

Here, for example, is the prophet Jeremiah walking forth in the early Spring, brooding sadly upon the spiritual deadness of his people, and

* Alfred Tennyson,

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seeing it reflected in all the barrenness of nature, but catching sight of an olive tree all covered with green shoots, his faith and confidence are instantly revived. He sees in the life of the olive the pledge and token of the presence of a Divine something, and he is able to feel that underneath all the apparent deadness of nature and man there is a throbbing Infinite life. Here is Kepler the astronomer, searching the heavens with his telescope; his heart filled with an unutterable gladness and his eyes almost blinded with tears because he feels that he is reading God's thoughts after Him. Here is Thaumaturgus, the mathematician, talking of his sacred mathematics because he feels that in working out his problems and theorems he is following in the wake of an Infinite thinker. Here above all is the Master, gazing at the flowers, the birds, the ploughed fields, the sheep grazing on the hillside, the fishermen casting their nets, the business man disposing of his wares, the farmer sowing his seed, the judge administering justice, and seeing and feeling in it all a Divine presence that fills his heart with joy and gives to him the sense of everlastingness. That surely, *in part at least*, is what the New Testament writer means when he says that "To be spiritually minded is life and peace."

It may be said, therefore, that to be spiritually minded is not simply to have a certain persuasion, nor to hold a certain doctrine, nor to belong to a certain communion, nor to experience a certain emotion. We can best think of it, perhaps, as an attitude and outlook of the soul. Just as it is possible for a dwelling to face the north or to face the south, and just as it is possible for it to face a beautiful, open, and sunny street, or to face a dark and sunless alley, so it is possible for the soul to face the light or to face the darkness, to face the eternal verities of God or to face the other way, and the worth of each man's character is determined by the characteristic attitude and outlook of his soul. It is recorded of an early Hebrew prophet that when an exile from his native city, he was accustomed to enter his chamber three times a day, and his windows being open toward Jerusalem, he prayed and gave thanks to God. One of the greatest truths for every man to bear in mind is that it is possible for him to enter the inner sanctuary and to open the windows that look toward the Holy City of God, or it is possible for him to open the windows that look the other way. In the long run the worth of each man's character is determined by the habitual outlook of his soul.

We may well believe that to bring us into the

right attitude and outlook of soul is heaven's chief concern. To this end Jesus came and fulfilled his mission, and endured the cross; and to this end the workings of Divine providence are directed, and all the discipline of life is used. The world has sometimes been compared to a school and life to a course of training in a school. The figure, though familiar, is full of rich suggestion for every one who will take the trouble to consider what it means. The world is God's great school, and under God there are many teachers. Trouble is a teacher, misfortune is a teacher, all the hard things of life are teachers, and, little as we realize it, they all work together to bring us into the right attitude and outlook of soul.

What is heaven's chief concern should be ours also. It is this that gives meaning to worship and devotion, and makes them truly glorious. Worship is for the soul, and grows out of the needs of the soul. It is to keep our life from becoming shut in and stifled by the cares of the world and the lust of other things which grow up about us, as trees grow up about one's home until they shut out the sun, and whatever way we look there are only shadows and obstruction. "Where there is no vision," says an ancient proverb, "the people perish." This defines precisely

the meaning of our moments of withdrawal for reflection and devotion, and the need of preserving devotional habits in the midst of the stern and inexorable pressure of social ambitions and demands. We need at intervals to look out through the upper windows of the soul that we may see the whole of life in its large relations, scope and end, that we may grasp the thoughts which only brush by us in the busier hours, and discern the distant persuasions of the holy character, "and through the opening vista send forth those quiet thoughts of consecration, which bring back across the spiritual sky the returning sunshine of God's illuminating love."

"The most threatening peril of our age," says Francis Peabody, "is the possibility that among the engrossing interests of modern life there shall be no spiritual outlook, no open window of the mind, no Holy City of the soul, the shutters of life closed, the little things crowding out the great ones, and the soul all unaware of the sunshine and landscape which lie at its very door. That is the materialism from which any life might well pray to be set free, the shut in, self absorbed, unspiritualized, unhallowed life, the life without ideals, the windows toward Jerusalem closed and barred, and the man within so busy that he has no time to look out to any distant tower of sanctifying hope."

I feel most strongly that man, in all that he does or can do which is beautiful, great, or good, is but the organ of something or someone higher than himself. This feeling is religion.

So long as we are conscious of self we are limited, selfish, held in bondage. When we are in harmony with the universal order, when we vibrate in unison with God, self disappears.—
AMIEL'S JOURNAL.

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUAL RECEPTIVITY.

THE progress of scientific thought is tending all the while to render more intelligible the secret of high character, of moral worth and power. We have come to realize that in the outer world a thousand wonderful forces are forever acting upon us. They knock, as it were, at the door of human life and crave admission. Man creates none of these forces, he merely learns to use and to apply them. They were here centuries and ages before man's arrival; they were unrecognized by generation after generation, but one day the minds of a few people were opened to their significance; men began to appreciate how they might be used in the interests of human life, and that was called a discovery. With every such discovery man's progress on the physical side has taken a great leap forward.

It is only stating this fact in another way to remark that all human progress on the lower and outer plane is a matter of receptivity. Of our own selves we can do nothing; it is only

as we appropriate these outside forces that act upon us and learn to use them and to unite ourselves to them that we become "great with their greatness and mighty with their might." The difference between life here in America, and life over in China, or in Africa is largely a difference in receptivity. The mechanical invention that is such a factor in our civilization simply registers our greater capacity for receptivity. And apparently there is no limit to the process. So far as we can see, it promises to continue indefinitely. There are still immense unused energies all about us waiting to be discovered. All the energy of the universe is at our disposal when our receptiveness is great enough and we are able to see it.

All this on the lower plane is but a suggestion of what lies on the higher plane of spiritual character. When we know ourselves to be thus acted upon, on the lower side of life, it no longer seems incredible that the soul should have its visitations, and its mysterious intercourse with a divine force that acts upon it. With our present conceptions of light, heat, electricity, atoms, and ether, it is no longer incredible that there is "a light that shines through a subtler ether by which the mind sees truth, and a warmth that falls upon the soul which kindles love."*

* J. Brierley.

Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit is but another statement of this wonderful truth. And the Christian admonition to receive the Holy Spirit is but another form of the plea for receptivity. In present day religious thought there is less said about the Holy Spirit but there is more said about the immanence of God. God is spirit and life. He is over all and in all. There is no part of the universe from which His activity is shut out.

Perhaps only the rare souls who are characterized with exceptional vision are conscious of the divine presence all the while, and are able to say with Madam Guyon:

*"I love Thee Lord, but all the love
is Thine,
For by thy life I live.
I am as nothing and rejoice to be
Emptied and lost and swallowed up
in Thee."*

In our highest moods we all have glimpses and surmises of an Infinite presence, and of a spiritual power by which we live, breathe, walk, and achieve, and by which even we die. There are moments all through the years when we are conscious of being thrilled and inspired. Some se-

cret sensitive fiber within is touched. In some mysterious way the heart is softened, gladdened, helped, comforted, and the thoughts reach out, and the soul looks up. It may be as one pursues his daily work, or reads a book that has commanded his interest, or converses with a friend, or listens to a strain of music in the street, or worships in the sanctuary, or walks under the open sky, or sits by the lake side, or on the mountain top. A moment before and the heart was cold and dead, but in this moment of vision and inspiration it is warmed and softened. There

*"Comes to soul and sense
The feeling that is evidence,
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries.
With smile of trust and folded hands,
The passive soul in waiting stands
To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,
The one true life its own renew."*

The New Testament conception clearly is that this Infinite energy that acts upon us from the unseen is personal and not mechanical, and that also our own experience tends to confirm. It takes a soul to touch a soul, and it requires love to evoke love. Sympathy cannot be created by

the action of blind force. The cause must be equal to the effect. To say that the Infinite energy which fills the universe is personal does not signify that it is limited, fitful, inconstant, or capricious. The personality of God must not be measured by our limitations. What we are coming slowly to realize is that the action of the unseen Spirit is as constant as the action of gravitation, and there is no favoritism. In the words of Jesus, "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." His grace descends upon the prince and the pauper and each may use the treasure as he will.

The great truth, then, that needs to be realized is "that limitless power lies at each man's threshold waiting to be discovered and used,"* and our moral progress is conditioned by our capacity to receive. "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," said the great Teacher, and in the proportion that we receive we enter into true character and personality. "Christ's own great life is an illustration on the sublimest scale of this law of receptivity. He declared that of himself he could do nothing, but what he saw the Father do that he did also. In saying this he spoke not simply for himself, he was declaring for all people and for all time

* J. Brierley.

the law of spiritual character, and power."

When there is receptivity there is enlargement of life, and steady upward progress. As one looks into the pages of human experience, they are found to contain numberless illustrations of this principle. A young girl sits one day in a quiet service in a village church and weeps, she scarcely knows why, but a strange softening influence has met her, and she has yielded to it, and her emotion finds expression in tears of joy, and all the world knows the story of Elizabeth Fry. A wild seaman, coarse, rough, morally depraved and insignificant has an inspiration to a better life and he acts upon it. His name was John Newton and he it was who in later years composed the sweetest hymn in the English tongue. A foolish young debauchee, the object of a mother's tender prayers hears the summons to goodness, and obeys it. His name is Augustine and he it was who shaped the religious thought of Europe for fifteen centuries. Surely the secret of moral attainment and of high souled character is receptivity. All that we have or can have in a moral way is not so much a self creation as it is a receptivity.

Side by side with our weakness and futility there lies an unmeasurable source of power that is the very heart of the Christian revelation, and

it needs to be hammered and driven into the world's consciousness. The failure of men to realize character, if we understood it, is earth's darkest tragedy, and it is due in part to the fact that with all our Christian effort and activity, we have not yet succeeded in forcing home the truth that the secret of character is within the reach of everybody. Perhaps the difficulty is that the messengers themselves have only partly understood, and half believed the message. It seems not unlikely that the next great awakening will come when the Church itself has begun fully to believe.

From all this rises the question how we may develop a larger spiritual capacity. There is no question greater than this, because it is along this path that we must travel to the highest. Here again we have the surest guidance in turning to human experience. Paul's word to Agrippa, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," throws a world of light upon the question as to the development of our spiritual capacity. Rightly understood there was nothing in that experience of Paul as he traveled to Damascus that might not have been explained away as easily as we explain away our own experiences. He might have called it sunstroke, and perhaps it was that, at least in its outer form. Or he might

have called it hallucination, or epilepsy. It would not have been difficult to find an explanation for it that was very different from that which is given by the New Testament. But Paul himself knew that there was something else behind the experience. Whatever its outer form may have been, Paul knew that it held a divine visitation and he obeyed the summons. He knew and believed because he had the will to believe, and the outcome was one of the most exalted characters of history. That Paul interpreted aright his experience is proved by the outcome.

The simple will to see, to believe, and to obey is perhaps the heart of the matter. The revealing God is dependent upon the *willingness* of people. We are *shut out* by unwillingness from the divine benefits just as we are *shut out* in the same way from education, or enlightenment, or any other blessing. Warning impulses are disregarded, heavenly strivings are unheeded, beatific visions are unseen and unfollowed, and the result is the forfeiture of life's highest treasure—the treasure of spiritual character.

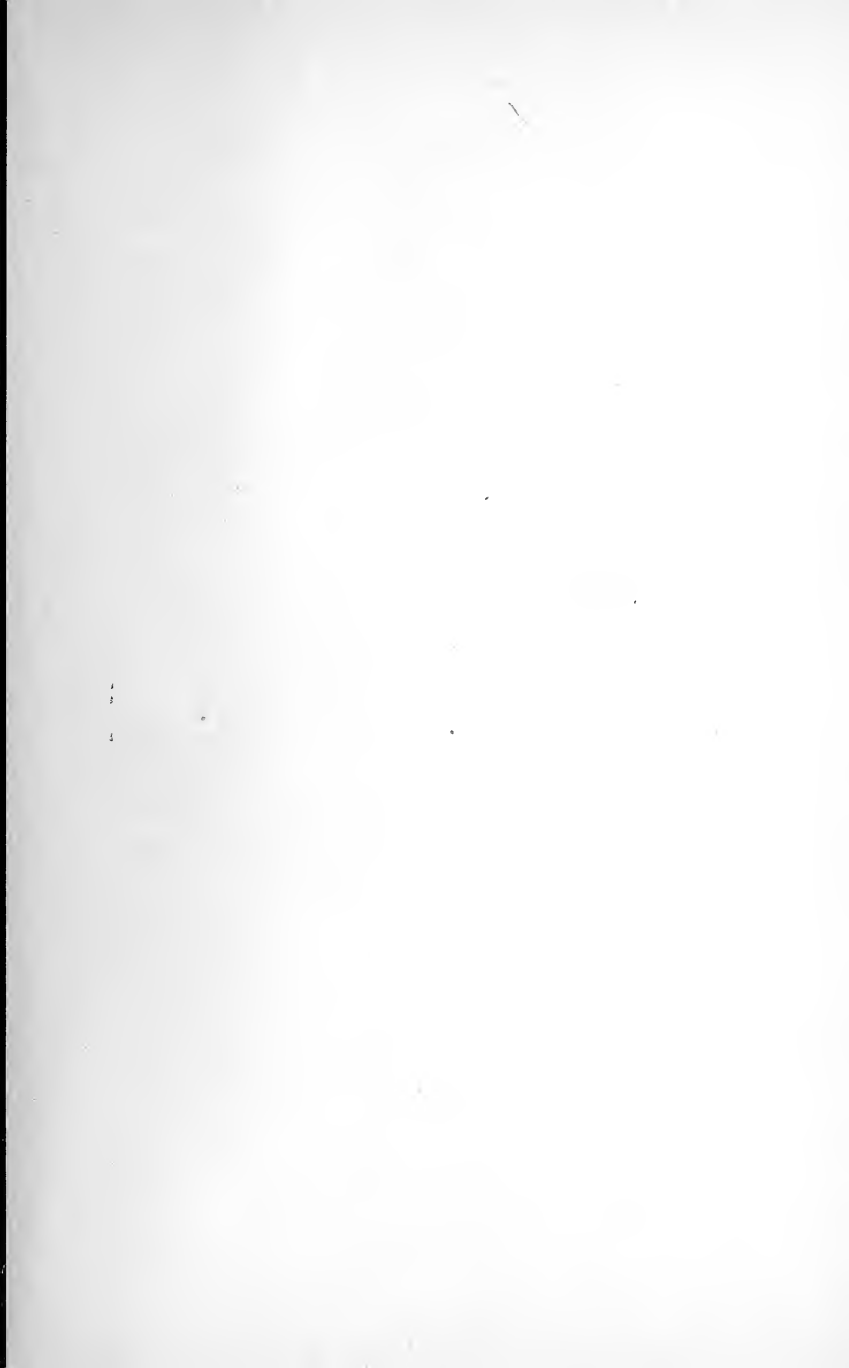
The bird in the heaven knows its appointed times, and we can easily picture to ourselves what would happen to the bird if the mystic call for its migration came unheeded. Linger in the sunset when the air is full of summons for

departure would prove fatal. Any night the chill frost may descend, and the Autumn storm break over the reaped fields, and the foolish bird that has missed its opportunity be starved and frozen. The birds of the heaven know their appointed times; they await the mystic signal and obey it. This is a figure of human experience in dealing with the spiritual. The summons to the higher life comes, and it comes often. There are visitations, admonitions, warnings, and they are left unheeded. Can the result be otherwise than a loss to character? Does not this explain why so many go down when the hoar frost of temptation falls, or the Autumn storm breaks upon the soul that is unprepared to withstand it?

The simple will to see and to heed life's mystic signals, to sacrifice the lower for the higher, the immediate for the remote, the transient for the permanent, is the indispensable condition of receptiveness. Traveling in this path of obedience to our best feelings and impulses, to our most earnest convictions of truth and God, and to our highest ideals of duty and right there is realized as the time goes on a sense of perpetual enlargement. "The surface is broadened upon which the Divine breath plays, the inner retina becomes more sensitive to the light from beyond the stars which fall upon it."

To all this must be added humility. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." The poor in spirit, are the teachable, the receptive, the people who want help, who are conscious of their need. They are open minded and impressionable. The most difficult and impossible people are always the self-sufficient. The Pharisees thought they did not need anything, and so they could not get anything. "The most essential requirement to all spiritual attainment is that somehow we have been made open minded to the good."* "Humility," as Henry Drummond once declared, "even when it happens through humiliation, is a blessing. Not to the Pharisee with his, 'I have need of nothing,' but to the publican who feels that he has need of everything, is the possession of the Kingdom of Christly character promised. The first condition of receiving the gift of God is to be free from the curse of conceit. The spiritually poor, that is the open and receptive and teachable, receive the great promise."

* Francis Peabody.



Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith.—THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Christ moves among men, separate from them in character, yet one with them in sympathy and assistance. The purest of the pure, the strongest of the strong, the wisest of the wise, the greatest of the great, "the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy," He has become and must ever remain the regenerator of the race.—MARVIN.

CHAPTER III.

THE SPIRITUAL DOMINATION OF JESUS.

IN the Gospel according to John it is reported of Jesus that he declared to his disciples that it was necessary for him to depart individually in order that the Spirit might come, and that if he should not depart the Spirit would not come. In view of this statement the question has been raised by a recent writer whether it may not be necessary to this same end for Jesus to pass away historically, and to be historically forgotten. "Is it inconceivable," queries this writer "that a billion years or so hence the human beings then alive will know as little about him and our specific form of religion as we know about the religion of the dwellers in Atlantis, or any other submerged land. Is it inconceivable that the very name of Christianity shall have passed away? And yet may not the world be more Christian then than now, have more faith, hope and love, be more sure of the fatherly God, of a brotherly man, of an eternal life and a purposeful world. May not the stream of spiritual life continue to

deepen though the springs of Judah be forgotten?"*

However it may be in the remote future in the present spiritual life and character have their greatest inspiration in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus. He dominates the highest spiritual consciousness of the modern world, and to lose him from our thinking, if such a thing were possible would be "to lose the sun out of the heavens, and the soul out of the body, and what we should have left would be a spiritually frozen humanity, a dead symbol with the reality forever gone."

For nearly two thousand years Jesus has been sovereignly conquering hearts, and extending his sway over the life of the race. Those of his own generation who caught a glimpse of the real treasure of life that he bears in himself, whether a learned Nicodemus, or a Canaanite peasant woman, were joined to him in a bond of love and confidence that nothing could break. The really remarkable thing about the New Testament is the consciousness of Jesus that pervades it. "The New Testament writers all set him in the same incomparable place, and all acknowledge to him the same immeasurable debt. They feel themselves conquered by the spirit of Jesus, and con-

* Prof. G. B. Foster.

fess him as their Master and Lord. He determines, as no other does or can all their relations to God and to each other.”* It is the place thus assigned to Christ which gives its religious unity to the New Testament and which has kept the Christian religion one all through history. In the words of another writer, “The New Testament authors felt themselves to be in captivity to their Lord. They declared themselves to be his bond-servants. His empire over them is something amazing and without a parallel in human history. And through them we behold an entire generation in the rapture of a great love. Their thoughts, their beliefs, their ideals, their hopes, and enthusiasms, their uplook into heaven, and their outlook upon the earth, are but different versions of the dominating soul of their Master and Lord.”†

This influence of Jesus, so effective in his own time, has never ceased to be exerted, the spell that he cast upon the first generation of Christians has never since departed. It has been the source of a stream of spiritual life that has produced in the midst of all varieties of temperament, education and condition a definite inner quickening, a new refinement of feeling, and a new order of self-sacrificing love. The sound of his voice has

* Prof. James Denny. † Dr. Geo. A. Gordon.

never ceased to be heard. His ideals rise above us like stars in the night. His example has been an ineffaceable picture stamped upon the minds of all the leaders of the higher life. The spiritual teachers and prophets who have inspired our faith, hope, and love were themselves inspired by his message, and quickened by his spirit. The philosophers who have prepared the highways of thought along which the greatest thinkers travel have acknowledged, "that he stands alone the greatest of the sons of men." The philanthropists and reformers who have led the van of human service have found in him their greatest inspiration and hope. The musicians, artists and poets, whose creations of melody and beauty delight the imagination of mankind, have worked under the spell of his personality, and been exalted by his truth.

Indeed, the sign of his domination is everywhere. "The whole sweep of our civilization," says Dr. Gordon, "has been played upon, awakened, and informed, wrought over from its first estate, and, in spite of continuous and brutal resistance, charged with the power of Christ." His thought of little children has placed a guardian angel beside each cradle. His regard for man, and his assertion of the worth of man's nature has made human life, even in its lowliest

forms, forever sacred. His conception of brotherhood is liberating the bound. His thoughts of mercy are as medicine to hearts which are bruised. His triumph over death has removed its sting, and forever sanctified the tomb. His vision of the future has cleaved an opening in the skies through which multitudes are peering with eager and confident faces. Indeed, it may be said that our whole thought of God and man, and our entire working view of life are encompassed, interpenetrated, and colored to a far greater extent than is ordinarily realized by the influence of Jesus.

The secret of this immense spiritual influence and domination of Jesus unquestionably goes back to his personality. But the problem here is to account for his personality in terms that will satisfy the demands of the thinking mind. There is a marked tendency at the present time to explain the transcendence and power of Jesus wholly upon the basis of his character. But very clearly this tendency ignores the fact that his character must be the character of some one. As one writer puts it, "he was not merely an exalted ethical habit, but a being to whom that exalted ethical habit belongs."* It is true "that a perfect life is not a trifling phenomenon in human

* Dr. Geo. A. Gordon.

history; that a purity like his could not come into our world without purifying; that such a life could not fail to reveal to men their sins, nor to honor and exalt the divine holiness, and to show that the sinner cannot be blessed in his sins, and that it could not fail to assert, magnify and vindicate the divine holiness, not alone or mainly by any one thing it does, but chiefly by what it is."* Still the fact must not be lost sight of that the moral perfection of Jesus was that of a personality, that beyond his perfection and determining it was his personality.

Happily with our present conception of God and man it is possible for us to believe in an outshining of God through the personality of Jesus without resort to the naïve and historically incredible idea of a virgin birth, upon which orthodox teaching has hitherto based its doctrine of an incarnation, but which modern scholarship has clearly shown to be a later tradition that somehow became incorporated into the gospel records. So clumsily indeed have these birth stories of Matthew and Luke's gospels been compiled that the genealogies which have been attached to them actually derive the royal descent of Jesus through Joseph. How, it must be asked, could this be, if, as these birth narratives assert,

* Prof. Geo. B. Stevens.

Joseph was not his father. Nor is it necessary in accounting for the personality of Jesus to draw such a distinction between his nature and that of ordinary men as to make his example and character meaningless for ourselves.

Perhaps the first and most important thing to be noticed here is the new conception of ordinary human personality that man is coming to hold. The most thoughtful people everywhere are beginning to think that man himself is an organ of the Eternal consciousness; that his nature, as Amiel puts it, "is grounded on something greater than itself"; that, in the words of Fichte, "our minds are related to the Infinite mind as the branches are related to the tree," and consequently that we are able to think and reason because of an Infinite reason at the basis of our thoughts; that we are able to approve or to condemn because of an eternal righteousness mysteriously linked to our own; that behind the ideas and and consciousness which seems so clear to us, there is the Infinite ground of our being, "the un-incarnated part of us,"* that is more and more filling us and realizing himself through us.

With this conception of ordinary human nature in mind, the teaching that Christianity puts in the forefront, that God was manifest in Jesus Christ,

* Sir Oliver Lodge.

that he was the "impress" or "image of God," "the uttered wisdom or outshining of the divine majesty," is made to appear more credible and intelligible. "In the nature of Christ," says Mr. Brierley, "humanity enlarged its borders to take in divinity. His spirit perfectly appropriating the divine spirit became one with it, and there was mirrored in his consciousness such an image of God and of the unseen world, that he becomes our divinest symbol," our everlasting leader, the freely elected master of our souls.

*"O Lord and Master of us all,
What'ere our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine."*

Nor is the manifestation of God in the life of Jesus to be regarded as any the less wonderful because it takes place under strictly human conditions. Indeed, it must be evident to even the most casual thinker that to be comprehensible, or to be of any value to us it could take place under no other conditions. The Apostle Paul, whose doctrine of Jesus is the loftiest, from whom above all others the Church has taken its conception of Jesus as the Divine Redeemer and Saviour, begins his greatest epistle, that to the

Romans, with the affirmation that "Jesus Christ our Lord was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," and the reputed utterance of Peter in the opening chapters of the Acts, which in the judgment of most critics constitutes a very early Christian tradition, specifically declares that "Jesus was a man approved of God among you," whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." The truth that becomes more evident as we study the life depicted in the Gospel records is that Jesus "entering into all human conditions, at every point transcends them," and by doing so, he lifts the experiences and possibilities of living to a higher plane than human vision has ever conceived before. "In the spiritual evolution of man," says Mr. Brierley, "we do not know where man ends and God begins. But as we study the records of Jesus in his life and death, and in the power of his resurrection, what we do know is that here God and man are manifestly one."

In view of the fact that Jesus is the transcending personality, that, in the words of Schleiermacher, he is the completion of the creation of human nature, and therefore the highest radiation of the holiness and love and presence of God, it seems both probable and certain that the spiritual development of the race in the future,

instead of passing beyond the person of Jesus will be in the direction of a more adequate knowledge of him, and that this growing consciousness of Jesus and what he represents, will be in the future as it has been in the past the most potent factor of that development.

It is everywhere the personal touch that uplifts and heals. There is no force in things to uplift the sunken spirit. Spiritual needs can be met only by spiritual means. In Goethe's autobiography the great German indicates for us the various stages of his moral development, and he shows how at this point or that he came into contact with some strong and dominating personality, whose influence remained with him throughout the years. He declared that his education was the sum of the effects that were produced by this personal contact. The fundamental Christian idea clearly is that it is by the knowledge, and touch of this strong and commanding soul that humanity is to be lifted up and redeemed, that we are to be filled with hunger for righteousness, with passion for truth, that our experience is to be deepened and enriched, and our characters made strong and resplendent with the throb of a new divine life.

The greatest need of our times as well as of our individual lives is a better knowledge and a

deeper consciousness of this pure and kingly soul. We need to live in his presence until we can say with the Apostle Paul, "He lives in me;" to study the record of his life until his image shines before the inward vision, and his character becomes more real to us than that of any earthly friend, and his word sounds in our ears with the power of a living voice. True spiritual development, is learning to love with his love, to sorrow with his grief, and to serve with his spirit of sacrifice. It is learning to do as he did, to go where he went in the interests of human need, and to learn to bear the cross of sacrifice in our own hearts.

Not every one who saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father in Heaven.—
JESUS.

*The value of a truly great man consists in his increasing the value of all mankind. It is here that the highest significance of truly great men lies. But Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light. And what he did no one can any more undo.—*HARNACK.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MORAL DEMAND OF JESUS.

THERE was nothing of which Jesus spoke so constantly as of simple goodness. Doing the will of God was a favorite expression with him; it runs through all his teaching. He was conscious of having realized for himself the life of perfect union with God. Unlike other men he had no sense of estrangement between himself and the Father; his was the life of true and loyal sonship. He felt absolutely sure of God and was perfectly at home in God's world. He was haunted by no fear, perplexed by no doubt, disquieted by no misgiving, weakened by no discord. The Divine requirements were never felt by him to be a burden. The will of God was both his law and his delight. "Not my will but thine be done," is the word that best defines and interprets his inner life.

Manifestly Jesus sought supremely to lead men into the mystery of his own experience. It was not merely personal adoration that he craved, but that his consciousness of

God, and his spirit of filial obedience to the will of God might be realized and reproduced in his disciples. "Not every one," he insistently urged upon them, "who saith upon me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven." It is clear enough that it was not for the purpose of exempting men from going to the Father that Jesus offered himself, but to lead them to the Father, into a true knowledge of His will, and into the spirit of obedience to His will. "It is not as a secondary God that we are to think of Jesus, more human and more accessible to our prayers and complaints,"* and it is not by way of relieving ourselves from going to the Father that we are to address him. We are to go to him and abide in him precisely that we may find the Father. We are to abide in him that his consciousness may become our own, that his spirit may become our spirit, and that God may dwell immediately in us as He dwelt in him.

As the word, "Not my will but thine be done," may be regarded as the keynote of his experience, so the word, "For their sakes I sanctify myself that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth," may be regarded as the keynote of his mission and his work. The truth in which his

* August Sabatier.

disciples are to live is manifestly the same truth as that in which he lived, the truth of a Godlike devotion, obedience, service and self-giving. That this is the way the author of the record understood such teaching is clearly shown by the fact that elsewhere he wrote, "Hereby know we love because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." He is the pattern life; ours must be run in the same mould.

It is true that Jesus said to his disciples, "Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls," "follow me," "love me," "believe in me," "I live in the Father and the Father in me," but in the light of so much positive teaching to the contrary such utterances can scarcely be regarded as an appeal for personal adoration and worship. It was thus rather that he invited men into the mystery of his own inner life and experience, else how shall the fact be explained that he taught his disciples to pray as he did, and to put themselves into the same filial relation to God as he did, saying to Him, "Our Father"; or that in speaking to his disciples of God he more often says your Father, or our Father, than my Father; or that he repeatedly refers to the disciples as the "children of the Father." Thus he reveals his desire to give to all the weary and the

burdened the wealth of life which he had within himself, to share with them the riches of his own inner life, to help them to experience what he experienced, and to teach them to obey as he obeyed and to love as he loved, without condition or reserve.

The history of Christianity undeniably reveals, at least at many points, a marked and surprising failure to appreciate the fundamental aim and purpose of Jesus. The tendency has ever manifested itself among his disciples to allow their devotion to him to take the form of emotional fervor, ecstatic tribute, and pious adulation rather than to recognize him as a moral and spiritual leader to be followed. Adoration for the person of Jesus has been substituted for loyalty to his spirit in doing the will of God. Even among the disciples of his own time Jesus recognized this tendency, and in words that even a child can understand he declared that he wanted to be followed and not merely to be worshipped. "Not every one who saith unto me Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father." "He that doth not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." His spirit of duty doing and of service, in other words, is the standard for all

his followers. The cross is a symbol of what others as well as himself must do and experience. In some real sense the Master's religious secret is to be possessed by the disciple, his experience is to be repeated in the disciple, and his life is to be lived over in the disciple's life.

In spite of this teaching succeeding generations fell into the very misconception that Jesus had foreseen, and that he tried to obviate. Before long Christianity became a worshipping of Jesus rather than a following him. Millions of people kept saying "Lord, Lord," but they did not the things that he said, and they failed to reproduce the spirit of his life. More and more the mind was carried from the historic Jesus to a definition of his place in the Godhead, and to the kind of person it ought to be thought that he was, and terrible persecutions were instigated in order to enforce their arguments and to secure agreement in their speculations. Unquestionably, something of the same temper and idea has been inherited by the Christianity of the present day. To men of discernment it is as clear as the sunlight that upon the lips of many, the name of Christ is scarcely more than a name to be conjured with. There seems to be an impression in certain quarters that to hold up one's hand in meeting, or to rise for prayers, or to say, "I believe" is

a guarantee of salvation, and the essential, if not the only thing required to secure admission to the "heavenly places." Such a spirit very clearly reduces the highest matter with which a human soul can deal to the plane of sorcery and jugglery. It substitutes for the high reason, and for the earnest and sustained spiritual effort that was taught by Jesus, a species of commercialism. It puts Christ in the attitude of saying, If you will call me "Lord, Lord," I will give you a house and lot in heaven.

And this failure to realize that the supreme purpose and aim of Jesus was to introduce men into the intimacy of his own spiritual life, to the end that they might draw therefrom a faith and experience similar to his own, and become morally and spiritually like him, has wrought great loss to individual character, and greatly weakened the influence and power of Church life. It is not difficult to recall, with a moment's reflection almost any number of persons who bear the Christian name, and whose opinions are of the most orthodox and approved type, but whose moral character, nevertheless, is open to suspicion, whose reputation for integrity is by no means enviable, or who are selfish, cramped, and unloving. We all know those who are fervent in their devotions and punctilious in going

through with the motions of religion, but whose credit is far from good in the world of business, and whose word is not to be trusted; or those whose greed has led them to trample upon equity, justice, honor, and all the rights of their fellow men; or those who are treacherous backbiters of their brethren, or remorseless gossips, in whose mouth no man's reputation is safe.

It is a pathetic fact that to a considerable extent all through history, the adoration and worship of Jesus have taken the place of obedience to his spirit, belief in a definition of his person has been substituted for devotion to his ideals, praising and describing him has been considered of greater importance than imitating and following him. When, as in the case of the early Quakers, or the Baptists of the seventeenth century, a few high souled persons have come forward to emphasize the moral significance of Jesus, and to summon their fellows to follow in the way of his truth and his life, they have been regarded with suspicion, treated with insult and injury, and held to be a menace to both the Church and society. It is of this temper and spirit that a distinguished Christian leader* remarks, that it is as truly an idolatry as the adoration of the virgin and the saints. The word

* August Sabatier.

"Jesusolatry" may not be an altogether happy one, but without doubt it represents a temper and attitude toward Jesus which are repugnant to the true ideals and aims that he embodied and that he gave his life to vindicate and establish.

Notwithstanding the advance that has been made in recent years it is obvious to the careful observer that something of this attitude still survives. The name of Christ is still defended in a spirit that is far from Christlike; his divinity is maintained in ways that are wholly undivine; this or that conception of the Bible is enforced in a manner that violates at every point the spirit of the Bible. There is still a marked and a widespread failure to understand that no one ever really believes in Jesus until the touch of the Master's goodness makes him believe in the possibility of goodness for himself; no one ever really believes in the cross of Jesus until he takes up his own cross and begins to bear the spirit of sacrifice in his own heart, and no one ever really believes in the divinity of Jesus until in the fellowship of that divine goodness he catches the vision of his own divinity, and the great word of the master becomes that of his own heart also, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Nothing has been demonstrated more convinc-

ingly by the searching study of the New Testament record than that belief in Jesus is not simply the adoration of his person, or the consent of the intellect to a doctrine of him, either the *doctrine* of his divinity of any other, but the response of all that is deepest in ourselves to the appeal of his spirit and life. It is to enter into the intimacy of his character, to allow his thought to influence us, his manner of life to inspire us, his spirit to control us, and to make with him the venture of obedience to the will of the Highest.

"He that believeth," said the Master to his disciples, "shall be saved. And he that believeth not shall be condemned." Such words may easily be construed in the interest of a narrow and shallow dogmatism, but it is becoming more evident all the while that the word belief on the lips of Jesus stood for a moral quality. It stood essentially for moral faithfulness, and unbelief stood for faithlessness. It is here that we come upon the cardinal error of much of our Christianity. Belief is supposed to be an assent to a doctrine, whereas it is willingness to act upon our moral and spiritual intuitions. We are easily persuaded to make the venture of thought, but not the venture of conduct. "We readily believe

that we have a soul, but it is difficult to persuade us to live as though we were a soul."

Belief is ever a saving force in human life when it carries with it the conscience, heart and will as well as the intellect. He that believes in high things is saved from the tyranny of low things; he that believes in the spiritual and eternal is saved from the tyranny of the material and temporal, and he that believes in Jesus in the sense of responding to the revelation that he brought, appropriating his ideals, and reproducing his spirit shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be condemned. He condemns himself at the bar of his own higher nature. He condemns himself to a low, cramped, starved, poor, and perhaps a wicked life, and that is moral faithlessness.

"Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief." That is a prayer for moral earnestness and fidelity. If the Church at large could realize that the belief that Christ enjoins, and that is the watchword of Christianity, is not merely the worship of the man Jesus, or the consent of the mind to certain opinions about him, but the keying of the whole nature to the spirit of Jesus, and to his moral and spiritual consciousness, what a force it would become to lift the whole world to the plane of the Master's character! Opinions that

command only the consent of the intellect, and emotions that find expression only in worship amount to very little. No man has a right to call himself a Christian merely because of these. The belief enjoined by the great Master makes its appeal to the whole nature. It is moral fidelity, and no man needs to be told when he has been morally faithless. "He that believeth shall be saved." The Church or the people who believe shall be saved; they shall be saved to the moral beauty and earnestness of Jesus. He that believeth not shall be condemned. He shall condemn himself to a starved and unworthy life, when he might have life above measure.

"If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the doctrine."—GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Any man who lives for the right has in him a germ of spiritual life, though he may not call it such, and though he may through ignorance miss many of the privileges of the sons of God. What he still needs is the revelation of God's loving Fatherhood and of the ability of Jesus to fulfill, that is to bring to its fulness, the law which he already acknowledges.—GEORGE ALBERT COE.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF MORALS.

THE representatives of religion have not infrequently spoken in derogatory terms of morals. It is said that less than fifty years ago an eminent teacher of religion affirmed that moral men as a class, and by the very virtue of their morality inflict the severest injury upon the cause of religion, and that the more perfect the moralist the more fatal the influence. The statement represents a point of view that until within the past few decades was very generally shared, and the term, "mere morality" still lingers in the speech of religious men.

While it is true that this point of view is now to a great extent outgrown, it is very doubtful whether the religious or spiritual value of the moral life has been made sufficiently clear to the average mind. "We have been accustomed to look at morals from the side of religion, saying truly that whoever is religious will be a doer of right as well; but far less often is the question raised whether doing right has an essentially re-

ligious quality within itself.”* Goodness is commonly represented as a necessary consequence of religion, but apparently the idea has not yet gripped the mind of the average man that goodness is itself a religious fact, that every genuine determination to do right has a divine significance, that obedience to the moral sense is the door that opens into religious apprehension and faith, that the “symbols of religion, are but the ciphers of which the key is found in the moral experience,” and that the condition of understanding religious truth is, as the teaching of Jesus plainly declares, to live the moral life. “If any man will to do his will he shall know of the doctrine.”

That the religious or spiritual value of the moral life has not yet been made clear is shown not only by the tendency of many religious people to speak with a patronizing air of the “merely moral man” and to carry the idea that religion requires something that lies outside of the moral life, something more than the command of morality requires of him, but also by the tendency of many strictly moral people to disclaim religion and to deny themselves the stimulus of religious association and worship. There is to be found in nearly every community to-day, a very con-

* Prof. G. A. Coe.

siderable number of people of high character, whose honesty, faithfulness, disinterestedness, truthfulness, and generosity can be depended upon, but who somehow fail to respond to any form of Church life, or to be attracted by any religious creed; it may be that they fail even to have any very definite ideas about God, or to have any sense of what Christians call the witness of the Spirit, and so they disown religion altogether. A man of this kind, such a man as we instinctively believe in as soon as we see him, once confided to the writer that a sense of God was utterly foreign to his experience, that what people mean when they speak of the Divine presence, or the Divine nearness was wholly unintelligible to him, and he raised the query whether such a one could venture to associate himself with a religious body or to serve in the name of religion without hypocrisy. Manifestly what such persons need to realize, as well as those who place religion in contrast to morality, and speak disparagingly of the merely moral man, is that the moral sense itself is the supreme religious or spiritual fact, that true religion dwells with the moral sense, is bound up with it and grows out of it, and that somehow the sense of duty and the sense of God are one.

It is true no doubt that there is a conventional

conduct and a decent conformity which are inspired merely by prudential motives, for the sake of praise, reputation, or some personal advantage; but the idea that the moral sense when it exists independently of definite religious beliefs, and fails to be attracted by prevailing forms of worship is always thus inspired is not according to fact. The truth is that the moral sense is fundamental to our nature, it is inherent in the rational constitution of the soul. Man did not originate it any more than his eyes have created the light or than his lungs have created the atmosphere. Martineau is doubtless right in affirming that whatever is most deep within us is "the reflection of God; that all our better loves and higher aspirations are the answering movements of our nature in harmonious obedience to his spirit; that whatever dawn of blessed sanctity, and awakening of purer perception opens in our consciousness, are the sweet touch of his morning light within the soul; that he befriends our moral efforts, encourages us to maintain our resolute fidelity and truth, accepts our co-operation with his designs against evil, and reveals to us many things far too fair and deep for language to express."

Every one who takes the word moral upon his lips realizes, if only in a dim and imperfect

way that it stands for eternal values, and that not to be moral is to set ourselves against the will of the universe as well as against the higher law of our own nature. The intelligence may not always see truly, and it may not always possess all the facts upon which to make up its judgment in each case as to what is true, but the pressure to follow the truth as far as we see it and to do the right as far as we understand it, is upon us all. "There is something akin to a mighty and universal gravitation upon us, binding and urging us to do every righteous thing; yes, to be honest, faithful, brave, just, generous, men of faith and love. In so far as we ever resist the movement of this gravitation, this life force, welling up in us with its everlasting "ought," we feel a kind of pain, like a bodily ache betraying disease. There is satisfaction like no other satisfaction, whenever our souls give themselves to this invisible motion."*

The conclusion seems unavoidable that obedience to the moral sense is an essentially religious act. If the sense of duty originates with man's Creator it must be that duty doing will lead at last to the apprehension and knowledge of the Creator, that moral devotion in due time will open into religious discernment and faith. The

* Charles E. Dole.

sneer of "mere morality" can obscure only to unthinking minds the fact that moral integrity has an essentially religious quality within itself, that men who hold to strict honesty though they fail to recognize it as the mandate of God are nevertheless obeying the voice of God, and that men whose fidelity is beyond price, who do right because it is right, it may be in the face of risks, where others expect and desire conduct of a different sort, although they have no very definite ideas about God, and do not hold to any particular religious creed, or associate themselves with any church, or incline to engage in any of the formal exercises of worship, are nevertheless fulfilling the spirit and end of religion, and they must be rated as religious men.

There is perhaps no better statement of the religious or spiritual value of the moral life than the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The great teacher here speaks to the duty doers, to the meek, the merciful, the lovers of righteousness, the peace-makers, and the pure in heart. He commends with glowing words the fidelity of each, and he declares that there is a spiritual consequence and result that lie beyond, to which, although it may be unconsciously, our moral devotion is sure to lead. The duty doers come at last into spiritual apprehension, "they

shall know of the doctrine." The poor in spirit inherit the kingdom of heaven. The pure in heart see God. The parables of Jesus declare the same great truth. "In each of these parables the way of life that leads through the valley of duty mounts at last to the height of faith." Conscience first acting as human is discovered at last to be divine. The prodigal outcast comes to himself and says, "I will arise and go to my father." He harkens to the mandate of conscience, and yields to the moral sense and there breaks upon him the vision of the waiting Father.

*"A larger life upon his own impinging,
To which the etherial substance of his own,
Seems but gross cloud to make that visible,
Touching to a sudden glory round the edge."*

It has been very commonly assumed by religious men that it is by the path of intellectual speculation, belief, and creed subscription that God is found; and it has required generation after generation of theological debate, and fierce word conflict to demonstrate that such is not the case. There have been many periods in the history of religion when men staked everything upon their definitions, and those were the least

vital periods. In the fourth and fifth centuries, for example, the creed was all in all. Gregory of Nyssa, a writer of the period, reveals the fact that people were so absorbed in the discussion of doctrinal riddles that they scarcely had time for anything besides, and never was there a time of greater license or degradation of character. Never was there a more frivolous or licentious people. No one to-day even thinks of turning to the fourth or fifth century for inspiration. It is the arid desert of Christian history. The truth is that mere speculation is utterly barren of spiritual results, and mere creed subscription is powerless to awaken vision. It is moral obedience that brings insight and opens into religious apprehension and faith. "The sentiment of virtue," said Emerson, "is the essence of all religion. While a man seeks good ends he is strong by the whole strength of nature. When he says, 'I ought' then he can worship and be enlarged by his worship. In the sublimest flights of the soul rectitude is never surmounted."

But here a distinction of great importance must be made. There is a difference between a moral life and the mere conventional conduct and decent conformity which all too easily pass for morality. The sore need of many is a clearing up of their notion of what constitutes a

moral life. The young man of the New Testament who came to the Master professing to have kept the commandments from his youth up is a case to the point. He was confident of his morality, and yet the first word of Jesus revealed the fact that it was of the merely prudential and calculating sort. He could not meet the test that was applied to him. When asked to sacrifice he went away sorrowfully. It was not by any means because he was moral that Jesus said to him, "One thing thou lackest." It was because he was not moral enough.

Perhaps the great truth that needs to be grasped here is that the fundamental fact of the moral life is the recognition of a law that supercedes mere inclination. "The really moral man is one who habitually and of principle prefers to do his duty. He is faithful not merely to the duties that he likes to do, or to those that are convenient for him, for one who stops here is still under the dominion of inclination. Every horse-thief, pickpocket, seducer of innocence does the duties he likes to do. The truly moral man, in a word, is one who surrenders his will to higher law."

It is not meant that one must be perfect in conduct and character in order to be moral. It is true that morality consists in an honest aspira-

tion and effort toward a standard rather than in a present realization. The moral man may do wrong but he does not purpose to do it, and he does not choose to remain in it. He may see things through imperfect eyes, and thus he may regard as good many things that are bad, but beneath all confusions of understanding and lack of knowledge there is the purpose to do the right as far as he understands it, and to follow the truth as far as he sees the truth. The words of the Hebrew Psalmist, "I have purposed," declare the great determining factor of the moral life.

To minimize morality in the name of religion, to relegate it to a place of secondary importance, and to regard it simply as a "by product of religion," is to introduce confusion into religious teaching that cannot fail to bring loss. Let us realize that it is possible to worship God without naming Him, or without having any definite and formulated ideas about Him, and this is precisely what is done in every honest surrender of inclination to duty, and in all true obedience to the moral sense. "It should not be expected," says Prof. Herrmann, "that our God gives us orders like a policeman, but as the Father and Lord of Spirits." For that reason his command does not present itself as something foreign. It comes to us to constrain us in our innermost being. The

natural conscience of every individual soul is God's own pure word, by which we know at once the law He loves, and feel the demand of his wakeful eye. Declining to be judged from without He comes to us readily within; He bends to our sympathies; He meets us freely in the private lot; He haunts us with the thought of a purer and more perfect use of our life. He brings the sense of duty and responsibility. He awakens the imperative mood, and though we fail to recognize that it is God who thus utters Himself out of the depth of our being, moral integrity spells obedience to God, and it is the door that opens at last into the true apprehension and knowledge *of God*.

Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. Let us not therefore judge one another any more. But judge this rather that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.—PAUL.

Every man however good, has a yet better man within him. When the outer man is unfaithful to his deeper convictions the hidden man whispers a protest. The name of this whisperer in the soul is conscience.—VON HUMBOLT.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AUTHORITY OF CONSCIENCE.

A BEAUTIFUL incident concerning a humble Quaker and one that is particularly refreshing since it belongs to our own generation, has recently been given to the public by a well known English writer. This man, an inhabitant of Australia and a lowly cobbler by occupation, had read of the awful persecutions of the Stundists in Russia and he felt that he was summoned to interfere in their behalf, and to plead for them. Crossing the sea he went to England, told his story to a society of Quakers in London, and through their influence he secured some patronage from the British Government. Going thence to Russia, strange as it seems, he succeeded in pleading the cause of the persecuted Stundists in the presence of the Czar of all the Russias. His mission over he returned to his native community and to his humble occupation as quietly and simply as if he had gone somewhere to buy potatoes.

The story illustrates the sovereignty and the

power of moral conviction. Had an ancient Hebrew prophet been permitted to describe this incident he would have characterized this man as God's messenger; he would have described the voice that spoke to him "out of the heavens," and his message to the Czar he would have prefaced with a, "Thus saith Jehovah."

In reading the Scriptures, particularly those of the Old Testament, we come upon a great many instances in which God seems to speak to men in ways that are unknown to us and that are foreign to our own experience. He appears not infrequently to have spoken with an audible voice, and men appear to have held direct converse with Him. The inference is sometimes made that somehow the men of Bible times had a great advantage over ourselves, and that it is more difficult for us than it was for them to know the way and will of God. A better understanding of the Bible serves to correct this impression, and to make it clear that in reality the advantage is with us. The men of Bible times stood much closer to the age of barbarism than we stand, and they had a thousand heathen customs, prejudices, and instincts to fight against that the enlightenment of our times has dispelled. In the early history of Israel especially, and down even to the time of David, when men

desired to commune with Jehovah they were led by custom to resort to the Urim and the Thrummim, a kind of sacred lottery, that was manipulated by the priest, and was probably of somewhat the same nature as the cast of dice. At other times they consulted the Ephod, a practice the nature of which we can only conjecture, but which appears from such detail as is supplied by the narratives to have been not essentially dissimilar to idol worship; or they went to the sacred grove and waited for a sign from Jehovah in the rustling of the leaves and the swaying of the branches by the wind.

There were times without number when God did speak to these men, and it was in the same way that He speaks to men now. He spoke through their conscience, and it is to their everlasting credit that they dared to regard their conscience as divine, and to interpret it as the voice of God. "Thus saith Jehovah" was their way of proclaiming the sanctity and the sovereignty of conscience.

Perhaps the first and most important thing to be said about the conscience is that like the capacity to think and to understand it is subject to the law of development, and is not a manufactured article, created once for all in a given form. We now know beyond the possibility of

error that the race did not begin, and the individual does not begin with a full-orbed conscience. The intuitions of conscience are *slowly* awakened, its vision is *slowly* clarified, and its capacity for judgments of wisdom is *slowly* expanded. During this process of development men may be conscientious and moral in the sense that they are actuated by worthy motives, but because of their lack of knowledge and experience they may choose imperfect and even unworthy standards of conduct. The workman in building a house may be guided by the best of intentions, but ignorance of his craft may cause him to bungle sadly the product of his work. So it is that lack of knowledge and experience both of the inner and the outer world may result in wrong choices even when there is the most indubitable sincerity.

Thus it comes about that our standards of conduct, our life rules, are always relative and subject to revision. The elementary virtues like honesty, truthfulness, fidelity, and purity, are abiding, but "on the outer edges of the expanding life change will always be going on, and revision will always be needed.* With the deepening of moral insight, and the increase of experience our judgments as to what should be done or

* Borden P. Bowne.

left undone will be subject to constant modification. Many things that we once thought to be harmful are seen later to be harmless, and many things that we once thought to be harmless are seen later to be harmful, and ruinous even to character. Religious conceptions and practices which we once thought to be all important are later seen to be of little or no importance, and ideals that once received but scanty notice and consideration at our hands, later become the ideals that dominate us. It has often been remarked of certain prominent saints of history that if they were alive to-day and maintained the same standard of conduct now as they did then, we would soon have them in prison. In comparatively recent years, for example, there were prominent saints in this country who were slave owners, and who firmly believed that slavery was a divine institution. There were leading members of the church who owned distilleries, and there were ministers of religion even, who "primed" themselves for the pulpit with a glass of liquor. There were church members who believed in duelling, as a means of settling private grievances, or who freely lent their support to the lottery system in the interest of the Church. It may be that our motives to-day are no better than were the motives of our fathers, but we have

certainly come into a larger conception of right and wrong, and into a riper wisdom of judgment. Thus it is that social customs have to be modified, business methods have to be readjusted, political practises, and personal habits have to be revised in order to meet the demands of a growing and expanding conscience.

Just here we come face to face with an exceedingly interesting and withal pathetic feature of human history. It is the resistance that has been offered to the Higher revelations of conscience, and the price that has been paid to overcome that resistance. It is here perhaps that we come in sight of the deepest meanings of the cross and sacrifice of Jesus. The life that he lived, as well as his teaching, made his presence a constant rebuke to current standards of conduct. When men looked at him and came into his atmosphere they could no longer be satisfied with the life that they were living. Jesus became a disturber of their peace, and the cross was the penalty that they exacted from him. Religious beliefs and rites, social customs and laws appear in every generation as the register of moral progress in that generation, and the tendency of men at large is ever to regard these as final, and to invest them with the most solemn sanctions, and when some prophet of a higher

life into whose soul has been breathed a great breath of freedom appears, and summons men to resume their march upwards, he is held to be a disturber and is visited with dire penalty. Thus it was that Jesus was "numbered with the transgressors," because he deliberately set aside the life rules which had obtained among his countrymen for generations, and by his character as well as by his message he summoned them to a new and a higher level of morality. His declaration, "It hath been said unto you by those of old time, but I say unto you," was like a blow struck in the very face of beliefs and customs which for centuries had been regarded as both sacred and unchangeable. Thus it was entirely within the nature of things that for the time the great revealer should be rejected, and persecuted even unto Calvary. "Man's deepest grudge is against the disturber who wakes him from his sleep and bids him resume the march onward."

One of the greatest truths that is brought to light by Jesus is that neither the moral life of society or the individual is stationary, and the customs, laws, beliefs, and habits which register that life are never final. There is something ever at work in the soul of humanity that is pushing us on from the high to the higher, from the good to the better, and from the better to the

best. Those who imagine that the conscience is a manufactured article, produced once for all in a given form, have yet to learn the first lesson of history. The truth is that the human soul was not made that way.

From all this three truths of unimpeachable worth appear. The first of these is the inviolable sanctity of conscience. "The law of love and of loyalty to what we conceive to be right, are of absolute and inalienable obligation. No outside authority and no conceivable change of circumstances can absolve us from this central and basal duty." Not only the authors of the Bible, but the greatest writers from Æschylus and Sophocles to Channing and Webster have emphasized the inviolable sanctity of conscience. When requested to state the greatest thought that had ever entered his mind, Webster, the colossal thinker replied, "There is no evil we cannot face or flee from but the consequence of duty disregarded. A sense of obligation pursues us everywhere. It is as omnipresent as the Deity. If we take to ourselves wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the sea, duty performed or duty violated is still with us for our happiness or misery. If we say that darkness shall cover us, in the darkness as in the light our obligations are yet with us. We cannot escape their

power nor fly their presence. They are with us in this life, will be with us at its close, and in that scene of inconceivable solemnity which lies yet farther on we shall find ourselves followed by the consciousness of duty, to pain us forever if it has been violated, and to console us so far as God has given us grace to perform it." Commenting upon Webster's statement, a distinguished preacher of our own time declares,—"That weighed against the conscience the Universe itself is but a bubble, for God himself is in the conscience lending it authority." *

The second truth is the importance of keeping ourselves open to the further revelations of conscience. An indispensable condition of moral progress is openness and teachableness. "There is no cure," said Robertson of Brighton, "for ossification." Jesus declared to the people of his time that the publicans and sinners should enter the kingdom of heaven before the self-satisfied. "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." That is the Christian demand for openness and teachableness.

The reason for this demand is clearly apparent. The world of moral truth is infinite and we are finite; it is without limitation and we

* Newell Dwight Hillis.

are limited, and the revelations of truth are conditioned by openness and receptivity. The revealing God is dependent upon the teachableness of people. Those who have nothing further to learn, and nothing further to attain in a moral way soon enter upon a process of retrogression. We cannot remain morally stationary. Failing to go forward we begin to move backward. "One must take every fact of nature," said Mr. Huxley, "and sit down before it as a little child, and be prepared to give up preconceived notions and prejudices and to follow just where the facts and the truth lead." He confessed also that as a scientist he had never found peace or rest until he had consented to do this. If it is necessary to be childlike in order to interpret the facts of nature, how much more so to apprehend the higher revelations of God through conscience and experience.

And the final truth to be grasped is the importance of being ruled by the spirit of charity. As a result of the fact that conscience is subject to the law of development, there is always a region of conduct concerning which even the best of people are not agreed. They all desire to do right, but they not infrequently differ widely in their judgments of what is right. This difference of judgment is not in itself a serious

matter. On the contrary it opens the way for a mutual and helpful criticism that is one of the best guarantees of moral progress. The criticism of the conservative helps to keep the radical from becoming unsteady and flighty, and the criticism of the radical helps to keep the conservative from sinking into sloth and indifference. Unfortunately both charity and insight are many times sadly wanting, differences of judgment are supposed to be moral differences, and the good intentions of those who differ from us are suspected. The man of conservative temper especially is apt to regard traditional beliefs, and custom as the final revelation of conscience, and those who differ in their judgments are set down as the enemies of Christ and the Gospel. It is this fact so pathetically illustrated all through History that gave occasion for the famous remark of John Stuart Mill that the appeal to conscience is an appeal from reason to prejudice and superstition.

Perhaps the most important truth to be grasped here is that one's conscience is his own and not another's. In the words of Prof. Bowne, "One may recommend his views to others; may give reasons for the faith that is in him; but when he insists in imposing it upon others he may be assuming a knowledge that he

does not possess; and when he concludes that those who differ from him are morally unfaithful he then assumes a knowledge of the heart that he does not possess, and falls into Pharisaic uncharity." Every person should realize the futility of impatience, brow beating, and denunciation in hastening moral results, and should know that until that which is perfect is come equally good men will be found on both sides of every great moral issue. Meanwhile, until that which is perfect is come, there is no better course open than to heed the advice of Paul in the New Testament,—“Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.” “Let us therefore not judge one another any more. But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother’s way or an occasion of falling.”



Every Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction that is in righteousness.
—PAUL.

I do not hesitate to recognize the quality of inspiration in many great books of the present day, and yet to me the Bible is not like any other book. It stands in a class by itself, apart from and above all other books, worthy of a reverence and a love which I can give to no other book.—
WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MINISTRY OF THE BIBLE.

EVERY Scripture given by inspiration of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness." Until the appearance of the Revised Version of the Bible the accepted reading of this passage was that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." It was supposed that the statement referred to the Scripture Canon as we now have it, in its present form and arrangement, and it was generally used to support the idea that the content of the Bible had been dictated to its writers in such a way that they were the mere tools and instruments of the Divine Being. In point of fact the statement is not that the Bible as we now have it was thus dictated, but merely that every scripture, or composition, as we would now say, that is given by inspiration of God is profitable in a moral and spiritual way. The statement referred at the outset to the Hebrew writings, most of which are included in the Old Testament. It was

these writings, in which Paul the author of the passage had been instructed, and it was these writings in which Timothy, to whom Paul was writing had been instructed. The statement did not at the first refer to the New Testament, since that portion of the Scripture Canon had not been determined, and many of its books had not even been composed. It is no violation of the spirit of the statement to make it include every writing, and every book that possesses a real spiritual value. Every such composition "is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." We have come to recognize that all truth is from God; He is its source and inspiration. Every book or writing is inspired of God to the extent that it breathes a message of spiritual truth, and is able to make us breath in a spiritual way, and to that extent also it is profitable. The statement of Paul applies of course to the Bible, but it applies with equal force to every other book that possesses a real spiritual worth.

Because of the undoubted spiritual merit of the Bible, and because of the supreme place that it has so deservedly come to occupy in religious worship, and instruction, the question of how to use it, and how to teach it to the young, so that it will minister most effectively to character

is of such moment that it demands the plainest and most candid answer that can be given. The good that we derive from the Bible of necessity depends very much upon how it is approached and upon the use that is made of it. Its riches cannot become ours, and we cannot share them with others, except as we resolve each for himself, to possess them by honest effort, and by earnest and painstaking study.

It is evident, to begin with, that if the Bible is to yield the highest measure of profit very much depends upon the method of study that is employed. A common method in other years was to read the Bible through by course, and there were not a few who prided themselves upon the number of times that they had read the Bible through. This doubtless is better than not to read it at all, as the practice of so many is to day, but in view of what modern scholarship has shown the Bible to be, there is not much that can be said in favor of reading it through in this way, and there is very much that can be urged against it. It is clear, for one thing that it involves both a waste of time, and energy. There are many portions of the Bible that simply cannot be understood by this method, and to follow it in dealing with these portions is, to say the least, unprofitable. It is also true that

this method has opened the way for a misinterpretation of the content of the Bible. The story of the misuse and abuse of the Bible is a long and sorry one, and it has been caused to a very considerable extent by the method of reading by course.

If one would read the Bible wisely, if he would get the highest measure of profit from it, the first and most important thing is to secure a proper introduction to the study of it, that will supply in brief and clear outline its external history, that will reveal the literary character of each part and section, that will acquaint the reader with the purpose and aims of each writer, and the conditions that they had in mind when they wrote. There are many such works to-day, like Adeney's, *How to Read the Bible*, and Kent's, *Student's Old Testament*, and Ladd's, *What is the Bible*, and Gladden's, *Who Wrote the Bible*, and Selleck's, *New Appreciation of the Bible*, that represent the best results of modern research, and yet they have been written for busy folk who have little time to delve. They are readable, and even fascinating books; they cast a world of light upon the Bible, they give to it a meaning and worth which the fathers for all their theories of infallibility did not guess, and they help to awaken an interest in the reader

which the average man is hardly likely to acquire in any other way.

Even more unsatisfactory, if anything, is the scrappy, hit or miss method that is now so much in vogue, and that is the particular characteristic of the ordinary Sunday School. Instead of reading the Bible in generous allotments, it is read in detached portions and sections, with but little reference to the context or to the character of the literature. The striking dissimilarities between the different books and the different view points of the men who wrote them are not understood, or in many cases even seen, and the basis of a real knowledge and interest is not acquired. The result often is that after a dozen years or more of this sort of Bible study, a few here and there awaken to the fact that they have acquired no very definite understanding of the book or its content. Others never awaken, and eventually they lose all interest in the Bible, and perhaps they never even realize what they have missed. When the Bible is really understood we turn to it with a manifold and varied interest. One part will appeal to us because of its strong devotional interest, another part because of its beautiful patriotism, another part because it records the life story of Christ, and another part because of its courageous ex-

hortation and rebuke. Thus we turn to the things for which we really hunger, and which feed us. We turn to different parts in different moods, and at different times.

The measure of good that we get from the Bible depends also upon the frankness and openness of mind with which we approach it, and upon the freedom from bias with which we consider its message. The fact is undeniable that the influence of the Bible has been greatly hindered by the sectarian bias with which its message has been interpreted. It has been read not so much in the interest of truth as in the interest of sectarian partisanship, to gain support for a theory of conversion or baptism, a theory of church government, of the second coming of Christ, the future judgment, or something else. Men have been more eager to read their own ideas into the Bible, than to listen to its testimony, to understand its message, and to catch its spirit.

For the average man, whose religious instruction and training have been of the sectarian kind, it is exceedingly difficult to come to the Bible with a mind that is free from bias, and yet there is nothing that is more important if it is to yield the highest good. It is one of the banes of sectarianism that it has tended to de-

stroy the capacity for unprejudiced judgment. To understand the Bible we must listen to it, allow it to speak to us according to its ability to speak, and make its own impress, and we must not read our own notions and prejudices into it. We should read the Bible somewhat as we read the book of nature, allowing it to speak its own message, just as the flower, the rainbow, the sunset, a bit of mountain scenery, or as a sweet day in June speaks for itself. The diamond wins our admiration simply by being a diamond, and by revealing its beauty and its luster to the eye. The lily wins our admiration by simply being a lily. The Truth likewise commends itself by its own inherent worth. The mind is made for truth as the lungs are made for the air, as the eyes are made for the sunlight, and the mind cannot fail to be impressed when it is brought into contact with the truth. Whatever truth the Bible contains will eventually find the heart if it is given a chance, not because it is in the Bible, but because it is truth.

It is a matter of common experience, attested in the most convincing ways that when it is approached in the right way and given a chance to speak for itself, the Bible has a ministry for the deepest and most dire of human needs. If one has been infirm of purpose, and false to his

best ideals, the message of the Bible will be an invigorating influence, that is like the sunshine, and fresh air in their effects upon the man who has been overworked and over-confined. If one has been worsted by evil, if he has been defeated in life's battle, and has come to feel that the foes of life are many, and his helpers are few, the message of the Bible will bring courage, and will open the way for new confidence, and hope. If one's life has been blighted by sorrow and loss, if the hand of grief has been laid heavily upon him and he has come to feel that he is standing in the gathering darkness, silent and dumb, the message of the Bible will be a voice that speaks encouragement, an atmosphere that helps him to discern more clearly, a power under God to lift the soul into a higher life.

Besides a rational method for studying the Bible, and an unprejudiced mind in approaching it, there is need of common sense and good judgment in the use that we make of it, especially in teaching it to the young. It is unquestionably true that the Bible as a whole is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, but it is not all equally profitable, and there are some parts which are not at all profitable as teaching or as reading matter. It is not meant as a dis-

paragement of the Bible, and in fact it is not a disparagement to remark that there are certain parts which are quite unfit to be read by the young and immature, and we cannot force such portions upon them without the risk of menace to their character.

The stories of barbaric cruelty in the Old Testament, of murder, of wicked blood-shed in war, of sexual lewdness, and other portions of a similar kind, can scarcely be regarded as profitable in a moral and spiritual way. Whatever interest such portions may have for the investigator they can hardly be thought profitable as teaching or reading matter for the young. There is in fact a real and urgent need for an expurgated text that is put in good modern English, and printed with clear and attractive type, and that contains only such parts as are profitable to be read. Every home with children and young people in it, should contain a Bible of this kind.

A book of Bible stories, if it is of the right sort, and not merely the pious "twaddle" that is so frequently carted about, is likewise an invaluable aid in the religious instruction of the young. These Bible stories rightly selected and expressed are still among our most effective means of appealing to the heart, and the thoughts

of the child, and of giving him such truths as he can readily understand, appreciate, and receive. By the use of such stories, if the Church and Christian parents were half awake, the Bible could be made the most interesting and fascinating book to the average child, whereas, in the majority of cases there is nothing that is so stupid and dull. A recent writer tells of a class of boys who spent three months under the guidance of a skillful teacher in reading the book of Job, and they were greatly entranced by it and thought it a wonderfully interesting story. Without doubt there are many portions of the Bible which could, and would be read with *interest* and profit by the young if there were older people with *interest* and earnestness enough to guide them in the study.

To sum it all up, the Bible is full of spiritual interest and profit both for old and young if it is properly approached, and if it is rightly used. Hitherto a false reverence has stood in the way of making the best use of it. Thinking of the Bible simply as the word of God, men have made a fetich of it, and have not taken the pains to examine into its real contents. Many have kept it in their homes as if it were something like an old horse shoe, certain to bring good luck. They have thought that by saying beautiful things

about it they were honoring and reverencing the Bible. We have reason to rejoice that the *critical* study of the Bible is destroying this false reverence; we are beginning to realize that the Bible has not descended ready made from the sky but has come up out of human hearts, that it is a human book throbbing with human interest. Many well meaning people in the church have been greatly terrified and incensed at the progress of the scientific study of the sacred book in recent years, but why should they be? If the Bible will not stand investigating we should know it. There is surely no refuge from facts in the ostrich method of burying the head in the sand. The evidence is daily accumulating that such study of the Bible is introducing an era of popular interest in Biblical study that is greater than the world has ever seen, that promises much for humanity, and for the advancement of the kingdom of God,

Pray without ceasing.—PAUL.

Prayer thus becomes not begging, but co-operation. It is the process of identifying our will and whatever effectiveness we have in the world with the will of God. We are rightly impatient with the question of answers to prayer because the reason for prayer is in prayer itself. . . . Prayer is not merely a means to an end, but its end is in itself. It is not the link in a chain of causes, but the realization of eternity above time and change.—GEORGE ALBERT COE.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRAYER INSTINCT.

"THERE is nothing that is more deeply wrought into human nature than the instinct of prayer. The motive that first prompts is a secondary matter. We may let the theories go and trust the fact that man has always prayed and pray he always will." * It is doubtless true that there are those who have not thought or breathed a prayer since childhood who would be greatly surprised by this statement, "that man has always prayed and pray he always will," and they would quote themselves as the refutation of it. The statement nevertheless is not refuted by such instances, "because the person who has turned back upon himself and extirpated his highest faculty by disuse, or put it to a sleep that seems death, is a monstrosity and not a normal type, and nature always has room for monstrosities."

* Theodore Munger.

The prayer instinct is a part of the contents of human nature. Men may try to root it out and to destroy it, but eventually it will come back. "They may let it lie neglected and unused, or they may set it down as a superstition and quote as proof thereof its prevalence among the ignorant and untaught the world over, forgetting that universality is itself a sign of truth. All this they may do and yet it remains that prayer is an ineradicable instinct. There will come a time in some solemn moment of experience when the instinct will assert itself and they will pray if but to the extent of"

*"An upward glancing of the eye
When only God is near."*

With a certain order of mind it has been a favorite theory that as man advances in wisdom and ripens in character the habit of prayer will disappear; that as the aspirations, and longings which constitute the undercurrent of prayer become more perfectly realized the habit itself will vanish. The instinct of prayer, as Laurence Oliphant once put it, is deeply planted within, but it seems to be the instinct of a low spiritual creature, and when we have gotten further along it will not be needed. The answer to this notion

is the life of Jesus. He was not a low spiritual creature. He possessed,—

*“A love without a limit
A perfection fit for God,”*

and yet the habit of prayer was an unfailing characteristic. There is one passage in the New Testament, which, if we reflect upon it we cannot read without a feeling of wonder and awe. It is the passage that tells us how the great teacher went up into a mountain to pray, and remained all night in prayer to God. “We are accustomed to think of Jesus as a sort of Divine humanist. Whatever else we believe about him we are agreed in this that he was a servant of humanity down to the very last detail of service.” He was the busiest and most practical of men, always among the people, and apparently with no thought but the people’s good. But in reality the humanist is only one side of the picture. Jesus had a passion for service that was marked, and he had another passion that was equally marked; it was the passion for God. The vision of God was upon him and he could not break it until the morning, when full of God, he descended the mountain in order to minister to the people.

As a matter of fact it is not the true expression of prayer that is in question to-day so much as it is the crudities of unenlightened prayer. Such, for example, is the kind of prayer that would determine the Divine will by a human wish, that would turn aside the Infinite law by a whim; or the kind of prayer that is a beseeing of the gates of heaven, as if the Omnipotent had to be placated and made willing, and his favors had to be extorted from Him, and that fails to realize that the mercies of God await to descend upon us when the true attitude of trust and receptivity has been found; or the kind of prayer that would make God the accomplice of man's selfish schemes and plans, or that would substitute prayer for rational effort, and aims to relieve the suppliant from personal exertion and sacrifice.

It is clear as the day that the argument against prayer that is based upon its crudities is wide of the mark. Even by the Greek thinkers, three hundred years before the Christian era it was recognized that it is not from the beginnings of a thing, nor yet from its history that it is entitled to be judged, but from its final expression. The truth that we have to remember when we think of the crude and imperfect forms of prayer that so largely prevail, is that human

nature is yet in the making. We are the sons of God, "but it doth not yet appear what we shall be." With all the progress that has been made we are still only at the beginning. We are children of God and the objects of His care and love, but we are yet in the making. The vague glory flashes of possibility are always lighting up our future, and this fact is one that whispers patience, and compels reserve in all our judgments of human habits. Though a man's prayers reflect great ignorance, both of the world without and the world within, it may yet be that even in its crudest forms it has a divine significance, and represents a natural movement of the soul, "an instinct borne of our nature and our position in the scheme of things," to which we feel that man's Creator has provided some adequate response. It may be that in a deeper and truer sense than is commonly realized,

*"The feeble hands and helpless
Groping blindly in the darkness
Touch God's right hand in the darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened."*

It is evident, therefore that it is not from its crude and imperfect forms that the habit of prayer is to be judged, but from its true idea

and essence. "The origin and root of prayer is in the soul's inmost life, in the yearnings and aspirations Godward, the deepest of which never come to audible expression, in the hopes and longings which form the undercurrent of life and which lie too deep for human words. "It might almost be said that prayer is merely a name for the whole spirit and sweep of our religious life, in its desires, yearnings, and hopes on its Godward side. But if this seems to be an unwarranted extension of the word, it may at least be said that it springs from the inner life of the Spirit, and from it derives its sincerity, its intensity and its power!" *

*"Thrice blessed those whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endures."*

From the earliest times of the Christian period a clear conviction of the Divine origin of the prayer instinct has found expression. "Thou hast made us for thyself," cries Augustine, "and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." In recent years, especially since the writings of Hegel appeared, this conviction has been greatly deepened and strengthened. A new conception

* Prof. G. B. Stevens.

of human nature, that has mightily appealed to the modern mind and has all but triumphed in the sphere of speculative thought, is the essential contribution of the great German. Man is now regarded as the organ of the Infinite consciousness. The incarnation of the Divine that is claimed by the New Testament for the life of Christ is now seen to be a universal fact. The chief difference is that what the personality of Jesus represents in its fulness, the ordinary nature represents in a more or less imperfect way. It is not that Jesus is degraded by this modern conception, but that ordinary man is lifted into a new light, and is recognized to be in germ at least an infinite possibility. "We have but to dig deep enough into the lowest and meanest human nature to come upon Divinity."

It is clear that when we come with this conception of man's nature to a study of human worship we have secured another standpoint for discussing it. It has often been supposed that the impulse to pray originates with man himself, whereas, the truth is that it originates with the Divine thought at the center of man's nature, which rises in him and permeates his being as the sap rises in the tree, and makes itself felt in noble aspirations and desires. "We may think of prayer as we think of the action of sun and

rain. From out of the ocean the sun draws up the vapors which are later given back in the form of rain." Thus it is that the Divine touch upon the soul sets in motion the secret aspirations and desires which arise to the Unknown, and afterwards descend as moisture to strengthen the character and to heighten and to purify the desires.

*"We kneel, how weak, We rise, how full of
power:*

*Why therefore should we do ourselves this
wrong*

Or others, that we are not always strong,

That we are ever overborn with care

That we should ever weak or heartless be,

Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer."

*And joy and strength and courage are with
Thee?"*

With this conception of prayer we can better understand the power that it represents and what it may achieve. It is not the triumphing of human knowledge over Divine knowledge, or the prevailing of the human will over God's will, but the alliance of human knowledge with God's knowledge and the human will with His will. This is clearly the lesson of Jesus' life. Few of

his prayers have been preserved, because they were uttered, or rather breathed out in silence, when he was in the stillness of the night, under the stars in the open desert, or in the solitude of the mountain top. One of the most significant of his prayers that have come to us, a prayer that was uttered in the supreme moment of his life, when the hatred of men was culminating against him, and when the cross stood just before him, should receive our special notice. It is a supreme expression of submission and trust. "Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt." This is everywhere and always the essential spirit of prayer in its deepest and truest sense. The example of Jesus is a living exposition of this fundamental theme, and the corrective of all our formulas and definitions of prayer. We have not done the best that we can do until we have brought our ideas of prayer into the light of his teaching and life.

It is here perhaps more than anywhere that the popular mind is confused, and is in desperate need of being rescued from mistake. It has been insistently taught that if we shall ask anything in his name, it shall be given to us. Failing to grasp the limitation imposed by the use of these words, "in his name," many have asked

everything, from the changing of the weather, and the alteration of nature's laws, and the gaining of health, wealth, position and knowledge, to the securing of an advantage over a rival in a business deal. Great disappointment, heart-ache, loss of confidence in prayers, doubts of God's existence, or the suspicion that if He does exist he doesn't care, have been the natural and inevitable outcome. "If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it," but we must not fail to grasp the significance of this Hebraism, "in my name." In the Hebrew mode of thought the name was the symbol of the inmost nature or essence of him who bore it. Thus God's name is a "strong tower," meaning thereby that God himself in his character and perfection is this. The name of Jesus stands for his essential character and spirit, and to ask in his name is to ask in his spirit, with his conception of the Father, with his understanding of both the inner and the outer world, and with the limitation that such insight necessarily implies.

It is not meant that prayer is the voice of supineness, but rather that it is the voice of alliance and cooperation. When the will of God conflicts with our own plans, and runs counter to our wishes, and disturbs our repose, it is clearly necessary that we should submit, and it

is well for us to settle in our thought that the will of God is good and that it ought to be done. It is clearly possible, however, to mistake supineness for submission. A man suffering from disease, the result of his own imprudence, or from limitation, the result of his own lack of earnest endeavor, may easily drug his conscience, and stifle its protest with the idea that his misfortune has to be borne because it is the will of God, whereas the truth is that his misfortune is not the portion that God has chosen for him but the portation that he has chosen for himself.

It should be steadily born in mind that God wills beauty, health, symmetry, vigor, virtue and courage; he wills charity, fidelity, tenderness, brotherhood and service; He wills that love and joy and peace should abound, and to pray in the name of Christ is to ally ourselves with the will of God and to hope, aspire, live, and labor with Him for the realization of these ends. It is out of such alliance with the Infinite that the confidence is borne—

*"That more things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of,
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life in the brain,*

*If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friend;*

*For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."*

3
2
6
3
2
3
3
4
3

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."—PAUL.

Schleirmacher's *"pectus est quod theologum facit,"* is true in a wider sense than he intended it. Deep down in the inmost feeling is that philosophy of the unconscious which waits yet to be explored, is buried the real secret of our theologies.—J. BRIERLEY.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INFLUENCE OF TEMPERAMENT.

WHAT men see, believe, and find attractive, in the inner as well as in the outer realm, depends as much upon the instrument of vision as upon the truth itself. It is by no means strange that one's intellectual complexion should color his religious faith, and determine in considerable measure the type of his spiritual character. Differences of temperament are a fact and not a fiction. They belong to the rational nature and constitution. There is such a thing as a temperamental bent.

*"So in every human body
The choler melancholy, flem and blood,
By reason that they flow continually
In some one part, and are not continent
Receive the name of humors. Now, thus far
It may by metaphor, apply itself
Unto the general disposition
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw*

*All his effects, his spirit, and his powers
In their confluxions, all to run one way.
This may be truly said to be a humor."*

It is no doubt true that there is something universal in religion, something that is fitted to all men and adapted to their needs, irrespective of mental coloring or type, and the conviction, of the Christian world at least, is that Jesus more than any other teacher who has ever lived, grasped this universal substance and gave it consummate expression, both in his message and in his life. In the process of disseminating the message of Jesus, and the truth he represents, that which is so universally human that it fits all men's needs, has been warped and narrowed down, through temperamental bias, until in instance after instance it has fitted only those of a particular type.

In developing their systems, declares one writer,* men act as trees act in building up their structure. The oak by its "oak instinct" seeks the outside elements in air, soil, and sunlight, which are appropriate to it, and then turns them into its own likeness. The thousand things repugnant to it, or which its assimilatory power does not reach, it leaves alone. In like manner

*J. Brierley.

according to their secret affinities, the disciples of Christ have selected from the material which he gave, that which most strikes and best suits their respective mental types, and they have assimilated, and embodied what they have selected very much as the tree does. For doing this no blame can justly be attached; it was the natural and inevitable result of differences in temperamental bent. It is merely the failure to be ruled by the spirit of charity in judging points of view other than their own that deserves to be condemned.

If we take, to begin with, the various creedal and doctrinal concepts that have been held within the Christian faith, it is a fair question whether the marked divergencies that lie here are so much the result of a purely reasoning process as they are of temperament. A splendid illustration to the point is the contrast that is presented in the religious careers of the two famous English brothers, John Henry Newman, author of "Lead Kindly Light," and a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, and Frances W. Newman, a thinker and writer of wide repute. These men who were born of the same parents, brought up under the same Christian teaching and faith, equipped with intellectual gifts of the first rank, and devoted to the highest personal ideals

and ends, nevertheless, in their search for truth, arrived at the very farthest extremes. "One of them came to a place where he denied the validity of all the distinctively Christian creeds, and the other to a place where he saw in the creed "the ingrafted word which is able to save the soul," and yielded himself to the authority of Rome, affirming that the publisher of heresy should be treated as if he were embodied evil." Points of view so different, held by two men so closely related, and each so high minded and pure, can hardly have been the result of a purely reasoning process. It is clear that another element must have entered in, and that was the temperament.

What occurred in these two cases has been happening to a very considerable extent over the whole great field. The positions arrived at by the different thinkers and so loudly championed by the different sects can never be understood apart from the workings of the temperament. The deeper we look here the more certain it becomes that reasoning as such, has had but a minor part to play in the formation of the different creeds, and the *various* religious sects. Standing at the very beginning of the Christian movement and in vital relation to it we have in three representative figures, namely, John, Paul

and James, conspicuous illustrations of three mental types. Each has a different system of thought to offer. The Christian Gospel is one thing to John, another thing to Paul, and still another thing to James. "It is life and power and inspiration to each," but their explanations of it diverge and even clash at many points. There is one faith but there is not one Christology. Christ was central in the thought of each, but he was by no means conceived in the same way by each.

The same thing has been repeating itself all through the history of the Christian Church. Hundreds in every generation with essentially the same material to go upon have come to the most varying conceptions of that material. Thus have arisen the countless sects, which seem at times such a terrible mistake and waste. To many thoughtful people it is becoming more apparent all the while that the different religious sects, the result of the varying temperaments that created them, while not representing the truth in its entirety, as their representatives have so fondly supposed, have nevertheless, served as a means of getting at the truth. "They have all been tunnelling through the same mountain, and the work of each will surely count for something in the final result."

In the various types of piety to be found within the Christian faith there is also traceable the influence of temperament. On the one hand is the mystic, the nature that is ruled and mastered by the sense of the unseen, the nature that finds its most congenial atmosphere in worship, that loves to dwell upon the mountain top, to gaze at the stars, to see visions, to dream dreams, and that finds in religious contemplation the gateway of heaven to the waiting soul. The New Testament representative of this type is the Apostle John. In him, as in no other figure of the early Christian age, the mystical element in religion reveals itself. John fairly revels in contemplation, secret aspirations and worship. From the time of the New Testament until the present moment this type has reappeared. In certain outstanding figures of Christian history, like St. Augustine and Francis of Assisi we see the most conspicuous examples of this temper. It is said of the latter especially that often while in prayer he fell into veritable raptures, that he partook of the Lord's supper with ecstasies in which his soul was rapt and suspended in God, and when he thought of the cross of Jesus he wept so copiously that eventually it ruined his eyes.

The extreme examples of this religious type

are apt to be visionary and unpractical. Like Thales of old, who in walking and gazing at the stars, is said to have stumbled and fallen into a well, and was thereupon reminded that he was so busy in trying to discover what is going on in heaven that he was not able to direct his feet, the people of this temper often see the sky but fail to see the earth. The heights are evident to them, but not the valleys. They have spiritual fervor but they lack judgment. They are readily moved to tears by a pathetic story, but it may be that they are cold and indifferent to a case of real distress. They are easily stirred by the thought of the world's need, and dream of doing great things in far off lands, but it may be that they have no eyes for the need that lies at their very door.

On the other hand is the nature that is ruled by the sense of duty, that is not given to fervors and ecstasies, whether of joy or remorse, that experiences neither deep distress from the thought of sin, nor great rapture from the thought of forgiveness. This is the moral type that is founded upon conscience and puts the emphasis upon duty. The New Testament representative of this temper is James the Lord's brother. He is the apostle of law, and his religion is that of works. He declares, "that who-

soever shall keep the whole law and offend in one point is guilty of all." "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." That is the religion of works. John might have his visions, and Paul might be caught up to the seventh heaven of spiritual fervor, but James continued to walk in the narrow path of duty and to insist upon works. This type also, has continued to reproduce itself. These are the people who pay well, but do not pray well. Their voice is scarcely ever heard in meeting, but they bear the brunt of Church work, and without their silent devotion and giving, the average Church would have to close its doors. The danger of this temper is formality and legalism. When spiritual vision is not assiduously cultivated the religious life may easily exhaust itself in outward observances and forms.

Another contrast is presented in the nature that leans toward subservience and finds its congenial atmosphere in the Roman kind of faith, and the nature that leans toward freedom and finds its element in the atmosphere of some Protestant sect. To one there is no room for liberality in religion, but only for subservience, a liberal Christian is a contradiction of terms, and

tolerance for other statements of faith is not to be encouraged but condemned. To the other breadth of sympathy is all in all, and the spirit of tolerance outweighs a multitude of sins. Over against the bigotry of the one temper in its extremest forms is the shallowness of the other that is full of mercy for every other opinion because it has no clear opinions of its own, and that is tolerant toward every other faith because it cares little for any faith. Again there is the contrast between the nature that leans toward self repression, and has for its watchword, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," and the nature that leans toward self expression and joyfully cries, "All things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

We have yet to ask what all this amounts to, and what lessons we are to draw from it. One thing at least becomes evident, the Christian ideal is larger than any person's or any group of persons' grasp and interpretation of it. Rightly understood it is large enough to fit all natures irrespective of mental type. Here it is that sectarianism in religion shows its limitation, and proves its temporary character, in spite of the fact that it has subserved some very useful ends. It has warped the Christian ideal and narrowed

it down to a particular mental type. "What Christ made broad enough to fit all men has been narrowed down to fit a particular kind of men, and temperamental differences have been mistaken for grades of spiritual life."* The emotional temperament in particular has been exalted by the sects. Forms of worship and modes of Church life have been adapted to this particular type. The strong, sincere, practical, but emotionally ungifted person has not been appraised at his true spiritual worth. His spirituality has been questioned, and in various ways he has been rated as of lower spiritual rank. There has been a lack of true perspective and a wrong division of the word of truth.

Sectarianism has been like an artist who paints a picture and draws the house in the foreground no larger than the man who occupies the hill behind the house, and who draws the bridge in the distance no larger than the man who is about to cross the bridge. The Christian body is slowly emerging from this limitation. "It is beginning to recognize and to teach that the normal exercise of one faculty is neither a more nor a less spiritual act than the normal exercise of any other faculty." And out of the sectarianism of the past there is gradually developing a church

* Prof. Geo. A. Coe.

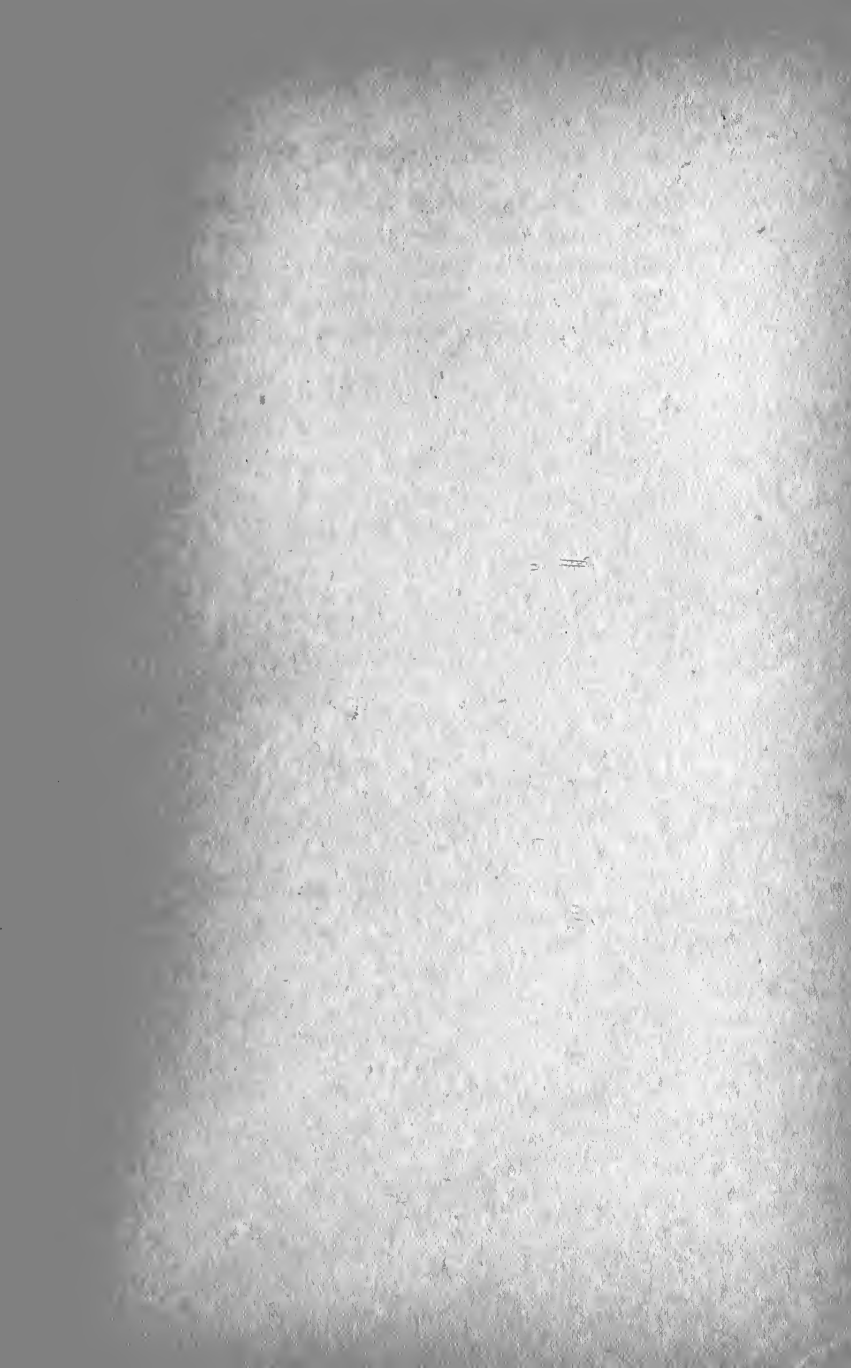
life that is broad enough to recognize "that merely filling one's station in life, in the fear of God and the love of men is a spiritual act."

In the Book of Revelation the inspired seer draws the picture of a perfect city, the city of God, the new Jerusalem, and he declares that the length, the breadth, and the height of it were equal. The significant thing to be noticed is that the seer puts into his city what he would like to see in the character. Height stands for vision, length stands for the sense of duty, and breadth stands for sympathy. These are the universal elements. It is because the character of Jesus so perfectly equalizes and embodies them that it possesses a representative and universal value. Growth in Christlikeness means essentially the perfection and equalization of these spiritual elements in ourselves and in the Christian body.

At the present stage of Christian development intellectual unanimity is not possible, but life is one thing and the theory of it another. "A man may be perfectly healthy, with a hopelessly wrong doctrine of nutrition or without any doctrine at all. New Testament Christianity offering us on the part of its most prominent leaders three or four separate theories, and showing the Christ living in and ennobling them all, gives us

an all sufficing lesson of the relative value of theory and fact. We should strive ever for a coherent system, but we should realize that the root of the matter lies not there, but in the Eternal Life which the theory seeks to express.”*

* J. Brierley.



The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding none, he saith I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first.—JESUS.

It is by life, by full, vigorous, emphatic existence that men are safe in this world, and that they save other men from death.—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

CHAPTER X.

THE POWER OF A POSITIVE IDEAL.

THERE is a kind of goodness that is merely negative, that is characterized by sterile penitence and vain regrets, and that issues in "consecrated do-nothingism." The picture of the house that was swept and garnished and left vacant was Christ's comment upon this type of goodness. "The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man passeth through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first." The great teacher was speaking to a generation who believed in demoniac possession, and he here employs the language of accommodation. Translated into the terms of our own thought the figure affirms the futility of mere negation. Negative goodness, he declares, is no match for the evil

that is in the world. It leaves the life barren, ineffective and defenseless.

Numerous attempts have been made all through history at a merely negative goodness, and they have all shown the same fundamental weakness, an inability to cope successfully with evil. This was the limitation of Judaism. Its ideal on the whole was negative, and hence it was merely temporary and preparatory. Its spirit was, "Thou shalt not." At least seven of the commandments of the decalogue begin with a "Thou shalt not." The result of this negative attitude was that Judaism had to protect itself by quarantine and isolation, it could not cope successfully with evil. During the course of many centuries it made little progress in the direction of a world conquest, and in the New Testament age the condition of Judaism closely resembled the picture of the garnished house. The house had been swept and garnished, but the evil spirit that had been cast out, had returned and had brought with him other spirits more wicked than himself. Idolatry, the common vice of the ancient world had been cast out, but the spirit of letter worship, formalism, pride, selfishness and hypocrisy had entered in, and had taken the place that was left vacant, and the last state of Judaism was worse than the first.

The Christian ideal on the other hand is positive. It summons to a goodness that is of a vital, vigorous, self-sacrificing, and self-communicating sort. Life more abundant, is its keynote. Moses said, "Thou shalt not," and Jesus said, "Thou shalt." Under the Mosaic ideal saintliness was safeguarded by isolation, and under the Christian ideal it is safeguarded by contact. The one said, "Quarantine yourself against the world," and the other says, "Go ye into all the world." The symbol of the one is water, that is able to cleanse, but runs the risk of contamination in the process, and the symbols of the other are salt, light, leaven. Under the one ideal "he who does no evil is a good man, and under the other he who does no good is a bad man."

Coming now to particulars it may be said that the positive is the only true defensive; it is the secret of moral safety. Human life everywhere and always means exposure. If this were not so we could not have moral character. If there were no conflict there would be no defeat, but neither would there be any victory; we should have a birdlike innocence, but we could not have humanity with all its great history and work. Moral trial cannot be avoided, since it beats ever upon us. The material out of which sin is made enters into every heart of man, and the true pro-

fective is "full, vigorous, positive, and affirmative existence." There is no strength or refuge in mere negations. Not to do evil, not to hate one's neighbor, not to injure other people, not to covet, nor envy, nor to judge uncharitably, are, as far as they go, both commendable and desirable, and yet they are mere negations. They do not state life "actively, gladly, kindly"; they shut the soul up to the repressive atmosphere of the Old Testament. They do not lead us into the exhilaration of the New; they leave us with our life swept, garnished, and vacant.

It is only by full, vigorous, and positive living, says the New Testament, that safety is to be found. "Put on therefore the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the lust of the flesh." There must be wholesome preoccupation, the life must be filled with interests that leave no room for sin, the practice of virtue is a defense against vice, duty doing is a moral antiseptic. In the long drawn battle with disease there has been developed the principle of inoculation, and by the application of this principle it seems not unlikely that many diseases which hitherto have been the scourge of civilization will some day be robbed of their terror. It is not that the disease germs are destroyed, but that a new capacity of resistance is established, against which the germs

are powerless. That also is the secret of moral safety. In the midst of conditions where men are dragged down by deadening frivolity, or by the hard cynical thoughts of their fellows, where honesty is besieged, and purity is daily solicited the positive attitude and ideal are the only sure protective. Mere negations will not answer, because they leave us "soft, limp, and impotent." Active goodness radiates power, it is full of moral tonic, and invigoration, it directly and immediately strengthens.

"It is by life, full, vigorous, and emphatic life that men are safe in this world. Men are trying to be safe by stifling life, by living just as low as possible. They are trying not to do one another any harm, trying to spare each other's souls by tender petting, by guarding them from any vigorous contact with life. But only by the fulness of life does safety come. The message of Jesus from the first to the last is an assertion of the fundamental importance of vitality, that the first thing which a man needs to live well, is to live."*

The positive is the secret of all helpful influence. It makes men safe and it makes them saviours. Safety and helpfulness are the two great privileges of worthy manhood, and both are bound up with the positive ideal. "A safe soul

* Phillips Brooks.

becomes a saviour of other souls." In all life these two things go together. No man can be really safe so that the world shall not harm and poison him unless there is going out from him a saving influence to other men. Goodness is communicating; it tends to diffuse itself; *we cannot have it without imparting it*. Jesus moved in the midst of sordidness and selfishness, temptations beat upon him as they beat upon other men, but he was saved by his wholesome consecration. He was without sin, and the atmosphere that he carried with him was like a fresh west wind that blows across a pestilential swamp. The germs of evil were swept away; those whom his spirit blessed could not be hurt. Thus also the quiet, unassuming mother whose life is of such a quality that evil thoughts simply shrink away may become unconsciously the safeguard of the entire family circle. By the contagion of her purity and simplicity, sin and worldliness are shut out from the lives of her dear ones. The good life ever imparts itself, and the contagion of goodness kills the poison of badness.

People sometimes think that they can be safe without being helpful, and thence have come all the selfish notions of salvation. A good deal of our religion has been like a man who tries to crawl through the world with face and mouth

so bandaged up with caution that the foul air of life cannot affect him; or like a man who tries to gird himself with a life preserver, strike out from the wreck and swim ashore, shaking off the drowning men who clutch at him. Salvation should not thus be reckoned; the greatest of all unfaith is selfishness; "He that saveth his life shall lose it."

Beautiful and suggestive is the Eastern story of a king who died and came to heaven's gate, and there was told that friends, and kin who long before had passed from earth, had failed to gain an entrance into heaven, that they were now in hell. The king was commanded to enter and to "dwell forever with the blessed, and he answered, nay, I myself will go to hell, for I cannot possibly separate my life from theirs." Then a voice declared, "Thou hast borne the last test," and the dearly loved appeared and embraced him, and voiced their joyful welcome. The story is a parable. We cannot have salvation independently of our fellow men. He who would take it on such terms is not worthy of it, and is not capable of receiving it. He only whose spirit is so wrapped up in the welfare of others that he would rather suffer with them than to know the bliss of heaven without them ever really discov-

ers the secret of life in this world or in the hereafter.

One of the greatest needs of Church life to-day is a rebirth of a positive ideal. Much has been said recently of the widespread indifference to the church, and there is apparently no adequate reason to doubt the fact. At a time when the world is visibly improved, and humanity as never before is open to the Christian message, when there is a growing love for truth as such, and a deepening conviction that Christianity is the religion of truth, and when there is emerging a new confidence in the pre-eminence of spirit, a new vision of life's hidden reinforcements, and a new spirit of service, it is strange indeed that Church life should make so little progress, that in fact it should have to struggle desperately in many quarters to maintain itself. "The Church has largely lost its power to correct, coerce, command. Its old-time warnings like the ancient guns have ceased to be effective. The venerable proof texts upon which the creed formerly rested securely, no longer carry conviction. Over against the doors of the Church are scoffers who call it a blind leader of the blind. They have always been there but the present crowd is larger and composed of a different class."*

* Joseph Henry Crooker.

The cause of this weakness is not superficial. It involves the whole character of the Church's message and work. "What men want more than all things, is a religion into which their whole manhood can go, and that at the present is what they fail to find." The Church does not supply it for them. Church life has had too much of the negative atmosphere of the Old Testament and not enough of the positive atmosphere of the New. It is said that when Ian Maclaren was a young man and in his first parish, he was chilled and discouraged by the cold and blighting atmosphere that he found there. Instead of abounding love and stimulation there was only criticism and repression, and he began to feel that the ministry was not his appointed sphere, and had almost decided to abandon it. Then came the call to another ministry, and the young man passed from repressive negation into an atmosphere that was warm, genial, exhilarating, and inviting. He still stumbled in his speech, and was sometimes awkward in his delivery, but note how a member of the new parish spoke to him at the close of an unusually difficult service. "If you are getting fast for a word or a thought, just give out a psalm and we'll sing it, for we are all a-loving you and a-praying for you," and that atmosphere made Ian Maclaren a preacher.

That is the atmosphere that always attracts, exhilarates, inspires, and conquers. Negation is depressing and repressing. "A child who is addressed affirmatively, thrives under the speech. Eulogize his victories instead of censuring his defeats, make more of his virtues than of his faults and he will leap to noble doings. A teacher who lives in mere negations creates an atmosphere of suspicion, and helps to smother the growing lives he was appointed to train. A teacher who lives in the positive, who loves and trusts, creates an atmosphere of hope, that woos and entices the coveted triumph."*

How positive and stimulating was the spirit of Jesus. He said, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." He breathed upon each bud of truth that he found anywhere and sought to coax it into blossom. He took each partial truth and tried to extend it. He laid his finger upon the latent generosity and half conscious faith of men and tried to educate them. He took the remnants of goodness that he found in the poor, shattered lives, and out of them many times he constructed a worthy character.

*"So kindly did he love us men,
We had not heard of love before,*

* J. H. Jowett.

*That all our life grew glorious when
He had halted at our door.*

*So meekly did he love us men
Though all our life was stained with
sin*

*He touched our eyes with tears, and then
Let God's sweet angels in."*

That must be the spirit of Church life. It must be positive and not merely negative; it must seek to fulfill and not merely to destroy; it must seek to guide and not merely to repress; it must radiate power and sympathy, inspiration and help. Many a life all about the Church is like a river flowing through a flat country, whose waters overflow its banks, and fill every hollow and crevice, creating marshes, pools and swamps, and because it is so shallow, and its current is so sluggish, the river is useless for the purposes of commerce. By and by the hills come near to the river, and they come not to destroy but to fulfill. The channel of the river is deepened and strengthened, its banks become alive with busy towns and cities, everywhere may be heard the hum of mills and factories, and a thousand ships ride upon its surface. Thus it is that the Church should serve humanity. Its mission is to fulfill

and not merely to destroy, to direct and not merely to repress. Not a single passion, appetite or aptitude of human nature can be eradicated, but all can be guided into rational and wholesome fulfillment.



*Is not the life more than meat, and the body
than raiment?—JESUS.*

*"All doctrines, all policies and civilizations
exurge from you;*

*All sculpture and monuments, and anything in-
scribed anywhere are tallied in you.*

*The gist of histories and statistics as far back as
the records reach, is in you this hour, and
myths and tales the same.*

*If you were not breathing and walking here
where would they all be?*

*The most renowned poems would be ashes, ora-
tions and plays would be vacuums."*

—WHITMAN.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEED OF A TRUE ESTIMATE OF VALUES.

THE Question of what may deservedly be sought because it is truly valuable is all important. The savage, unaccustomed to the standards of civilization will exchange for a trinket a collection of furs that to the shrewd and not overscrupulous trader is worth hundreds, or even thousands of dollars, and he will surrender a tract of land, or a stretch of forest that represents untold worth for a gun of antiquated pattern, and a supply of ammunition that is soon exhausted. His lack of discernment in measuring ordinary material values makes him the easy victim of unprincipled expoliation.

In the most various and convincing ways the truth is brought home to us all the while that delusion in respect to values is common elsewhere than amongst primitive and unsophisticated peoples. A careful scrutiny of prevailing standards and choices in reference to life's higher interests and meaning affords abundant material for serious and somewhat dubious reflection. It is com-

monly supposed that we value what is truly valuable, and our exclamations of approval pass from lip to lip, but if we ever take the trouble to go to the New Testament we discover that such is not always the fact, by any means. All too often our judgments of value are like echoes that reflect whatever cry may happen to penetrate the atmosphere. We are prone to be sheep-like in our admirations. When one, the bell-wether, has taken by a chance a certain course, all the others follow after. The loss that results from this "gregarious and indiscriminate admiration" is inevitable. Personal character is injured, and the progress of the heavenly kingdom is retarded. It may be stated unqualifiedly that the supreme end of religious education is to develop a true estimate of values and to lead men to seek what is truly valuable.

In our judgments of what makes life worth the effort, and what constitutes its chief interest there is an evident need of a true estimate of values. That things are made for men, and not men for things, and that success is to be measured by the development of character and not by material possessions would seem to be self-evident propositions, but all too often the standard is just reversed.

It is not life but a living, that in the case of the

average man is the paramount concern. With a countless throng it is the food, drink, and raiment of mere subsistence upon which the sole accent is layed. In the fierce struggle for existence which claims such a large proportion of the race not a few are crushed and brutalized by their conditions, chiefly because they have never learned to measure life in other than material terms. For many others, and this is a materialism of a baser sort, it is the struggle not for subsistence, but for a surfeit of wealth and luxuries that is allowed to absorb the strength and to dissipate the energies. By all such the question of what a man is worth is answered in terms of dollars and cents. He who has made a fortune, although his soul has dried up in the process until all its juices are gone and only the thin, fierce lust of accumulation is left is adjudged to be a success, and he who has lost a fortune is said to have failed. "To many there is no other conception of the enlargement and enrichment of life than to multiply its outward luxuries. Food, drink and raiment having been obtained sufficient for all normal and wholesome use, the one concern is for more and finer food, drink and raiment. It may now be *pate de foie gras* instead of salt pork, champagne instead of beer, silk and broadcloth instead of corduroy and

calico. A mansion on the avenue, a villa or a palace in Newport in place of the humble home on the back street. But all too often the object of life has not changed. It is just as materialistic as ever. Its tone has not risen, it has rather lowered. There is no spiritual purpose or meaning to it in their eyes. They are so busy making a living that they never stop to think about the life."*

How absurd, were it not so pathetic, would all this appear. It is as if one should try to kindle a fire with a canvas of Raphael or Murillo, and should succeed in kindling the fire, but at the expense of the priceless canvas. It is but a repetition on another scale of the stupid action of the savage who barter away his best possession, the hunting ground of his fathers, for a trinket. Life first, says the great teacher, and things afterwards. Things are made for life and not life for things. What is the use of existing at all unless a life is to be built thereon, a life that is strong, purposeful, useful, and unselfish. What this generation needs to learn almost above everything is that the profit that makes life worth the effort is moral and not material, that it is not something to act as blinders about our eyes to keep down our nervousness that we need, but

* Bishop Charles D. Williams.

escape into the will of God by the door of truth and unselfish devotion that is revealed in the life and message of Jesus.

In our judgments of the importance of outward conditions for the unfoldment of life there is need of a true estimate of values. It is commonly fancied that what is needed for the manifestation of superior qualities and graces is superior conditions, and it is confidently believed that if these were supplied a degree of excellence might be exemplified that is not possible otherwise. What very many fail to realize is that in the long run it is a consecrated purpose that counts for most in the development of a life, and in the building of a character, that man does not live by bread alone, that the springs of life are within, and that with the right moral outlook even the most cramped and meager conditions are sufficient to discipline the life into absolute worth and excellence. History has recorded the fact that the common and modest daisy was a sufficient theme to secure for Robert Burns a place among the immortal bards of history. An old wooden shoe with a single string stretched upon it was all the instrument that was needed by Paganinni to demonstrate the gifts of a master musician. A bit of canvas only a few inches square was ample space and means for

Raphael to prove to all the generations that he was the prince of painters. As superior intellect manifests itself in the use it makes of ordinary opportunities and means, so in the moral realm, the use that is made of such conditions as lie within our reach, however meager or commonplace, reveals the quality of the soul. The common toil and drudgery, the common care and responsibility, the common lot and sphere of the average man, are the best kind of soil, if we only knew it, in which to grow a soul and to develop a character.

*"The heart it hath its own estate.
The mind it hath its wealth untold.
It needs not fortune to be great,
While there's a coin surpassing gold.*

*'Tis not the house that honor makes,
True honor is a thing divine,
It is the mind precedence takes
It is the spirit makes the shrine."*

It is worthy of note that the life which in excellence and goodness excels all others, for nearly thirty years in its outer aspects at least, was characterized only by the ordinary and commonplace. Is not this the carpenter? Yes, that

is the beautiful fact that it was in the Nazareth of the world's common lot that the world's greatest life grew up. There were no dazzling episodes, no striking situations, no tragic sorrows, nothing marvelous or uncommon. There was just the humdrum of the common place with which every life is familiar, but at the end of thirty years Jesus emerged from these tame and insignificant conditions with a moral splendor such as man had never seen, and of which man had never dreamed. There is nothing in history that is more impressive than the fact that in the midst of scenes and experiences that the average man would regard as intolerably narrow and petty, Jesus grew into that supreme character which commands the admiration and reverence of mankind.

In our judgments of what constitutes essential devotion there is need of a true estimate of values. "Seekest thou great things for thyself—seek them not." Great things, conspicuous situations, dazzling outward conditions are unnecessary for the attainment of great character, and they are unnecessary for the direction of the life in useful and glorifying service. The discoveries of science which have given distinction to this age have taught as much about the infinitely great and the infinitely small, and perhaps the

greatest lesson of science is that we must recognize the infinitely great in the infinitely small. "The microscope reveals the glory of God as truly as the telescope. The most minute and apparently insignificant of God's works reveals the same thoroughness and care as the most gigantic. The commonplace dewdrop rivals the splendor of the diamond. The wing of the moth is as truly marvelous as the wing of the golden eagle. The bubble on the surface of the stream duplicates the grace and glory of the firmament." All this contains a needed lesson for us. Because of a false estimate of values we miss the glory which lies in the humble, unassuming, and self-effacing ways of service while we sigh for what is splendid, showy, and romantic. "When you dip a cup of water from the ocean it seems as if the blue had all disappeared, but in point of fact it is there in the cup just the same as in the ocean, only it requires a finer eye to see it." Thus it is that the glory seems to disappear from the ordinary, and obscure acts of service. As God reveals his devotion in the small and common things, so we can reveal ours. We can prove our earnestness, and consecration in petty sacrifice as truly as at the martyr's stake; we can show our courage as much by witnessing for the good in daily life as by witnessing be-

fore kings, and we can prove our patience as truly by smiling away the worry of common days as by bowing before some bitter tragedy. All the generosity of the philanthropist, all the zeal of the evangelist, all the courage of the martyr, and all the love of the seraph, may be felt and exhibited by humble people in the humblest ways of life. The glory may not be so apparent, but nevertheless it is there to those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand.

And in our judgments of what makes life truly happy there is need of a clear estimate of values. The craving for happiness is universal, and that the soul was meant for happiness is shown by the instinct for it, an instinct that Jesus ever took for granted and sought to develop. Gloom even in the ascetic morality was regarded as of the nature of mortal sin. "Enjoy thy existence," says Jean Paul, "more than thy manner of existence, and let the dearest object of thy consciousness be this consciousness itself." It is this capacity for happiness that differentiates us from the lower orders of life, that marks our humanity and that keeps us ever facing Godward. But experience shows that happiness is too commonly associated with the outward states. Men fail to realize to what an enormous extent they have their happiness in

their own hands. We sigh and strain for great things that are to make us happy and content, and all the while we miss the sweet and satisfying joy of common and familiar things which are within our reach. We complain because we cannot gaze upon distant wonders, when if we understood it we might catch a glimpse of heaven in a common flower and listen to the music of the spheres in the humming of a bee. Here inside of us, is the force that can drive away the clouds, a power that can call up good thoughts and dispel bad ones, which can concentrate on the "lighted" side of things, which can fall back on gracious memories as a refuge from evil, which, in a word, can make its own weather, winning through the thickest clouds to the blue sky and the shining sun. Simply to realize the significance of "the great within" is to find that the conditions all about us, that are in the reach of all, are as full of "beauty and blessing as a jeweler's apron is full of gold dust."

The great need of our age is to realize that a man's life "consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth," but in the capacity to appreciate and to absorb the divine that is in the simple elemental things of life that lie on every side and within the reach of all.

Suppose the case of two men who walk

through a great conservatory; the one has the title deeds in his pocket, but he is utterly destitute of aesthetic feeling and cultivation; the other man doesn't even own a flower bed, but he has the capacity to appreciate, every shade of color, every breath of fragrance. Which man really enjoys the conservatory, the man who controls it or the man who is able to appreciate it? So the real enjoyment and blessedness of life must ever lie, not merely in outward control, but in the capacity to see, appreciate and understand. Given that capacity the means of a happy life are on every side, in one's own home however modest, in one's own possessions however meager, in one's own friendships however humble, in all the common world. "Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not," but "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." There is a whole kingdom to be sought, won, and enjoyed in a common flower, in a common friendship, or in a common day.

*"Will you seek far off? You surely come back
at last,*

*In things best known to you, finding the best or
as good as the best,*

*In folks nearest to you, finding the sweetest,
strongest, lovingest.*

*Happiness, knowledge, not in another place, but
this place, not
For another hour, but this hour."*



Freely ye have received, freely give.—JESUS.

It is only with renunciation that life properly speaking, can be said to begin. In a valiant suffering for others, not in a slothful making others suffer for us, did nobleness ever lie.—CARLYLE.

I expect to pass through this life but once. If therefore, there is any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.—HEGEMAN.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SENSE OF MORAL DEBT.

THE inevitable accompaniment of our nature at its best is the sense of moral debt. As men rise in the moral scale, as spiritual character is realized they feel themselves laid hold of by an "imperious demand for a higher helpfulness," they recognize that a great account is laid up against them, which they are morally obliged, as far as possible, to repay; that "we are where we are and what we are because of the boundless benefactions which have been bestowed upon us by invisible donors, and because of the measureless service that has been rendered us by invisible helpers."

The word of Christ to His disciples, "Freely ye have received, freely give," when broadly interpreted is an incisive and impressive statement of a principle of grace and of corresponding debt that is as comprehensive as human life. Rightly understood it requires us to examine into the process by which all things have come to us, and not to take them as a matter of course.

Merely to begin to do this is to deal a death blow at the self-absorbed and self-centered spirit. The deeper we look into things the more we recognize that everything of worth that we possess represents a mighty cost, and has come to us richly stored with human life, and if we have a human heart within us we shall want to make some return for what we have received.

Beginning on the lowest plane, with the ordinary material benefits and comforts of life, with the things we eat, wear, spend, and use, what a gospel of grace and debt is daily preached by these benefits. No earnest person who brings himself to reflect upon the material comforts of life, who remembers what they represent in the way of human sacrifice, and what they have cost to those who have toiled day and night amidst every sort of exposure, and hardship, in the fog, and in the tempest, on the storm tossed sea, in the lonely forest, in the damp and gaseous atmosphere of the coal mine, and amidst a hundred other conditions where there is the smallest spiritual aid and the smallest chance of morality, can fail to experience a profound sense of moral debt, and to be stirred with a new mighty impulse to make some return.

If we reflect upon the liberties that we possess and how they have reached us what a gospel

of grace and debt they preach. It is said of the poet Keats that when he walked in a garden of roses and saw the ground all covered with pink petals he exclaimed, "Next year the roses should be very red." It is said by Virgil that when Æneas tore the bough from off the myrtle tree that the tree exuded blood. These expressions represent the poet's way of saying that civilization is a growth that is nourished, not by water nor by snow, but by the blood of patriots and prophets. We are prone to accept our liberties as a matter of course, as if they came to us like the sunshine and the fresh air, but when we reflect upon what they have cost, and remember the human life that is stored up in them we cannot fail to be moved with the sense of moral debt.

The age seems remote when the criticism of a baron meant the confiscation of the peasant's lands, the criticism of the pope meant the dungeon, and the criticism of a king meant death, but to win the freedom to think, to speak and to act has required the most God-like heroism and devotion. "From Marathon and Salamis, from the Netherlands under William the Silent, from the British sailors who fired the Spanish Armada, from Cromwell's Ironsides at Marston Moor, from the Plains of Abraham, from

Bunker Hill and Bennington, from Shiloh, Gettysburg, the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House, and from all the brave souls of all the world, who have risked their lives for freedom and for law, for justice and humanity have come the liberties that we possess to-day.”*

Take once more the religious faith which both in its content and in the way it has come to us represents such a tremendous debt. “The human consciousness is aware of a secret inflow upon its upper side.” We recognize the presence of a Love that inspires, comforts, helps, and clings to us forever.

*“O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul on Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean’s depth its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

Strengthened by this faith men have ventured every risk, they have endured every hardship to share their faith with others, and to make it a common possession. Through the sufferings of a great company of witnesses and martyrs who received “mockings and scourgings, yea, more-over of bonds and imprisonment,” who were

* President Hyde.

stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, or who were driven into exile and "went about in sheep skins, goat skins, being destitute, afflicted or ill-treated," we trace our faith back to him who endured the cross. It cost the tragedy of Calvary that for the God of the Pharisee we might have the God of the meek and lowly, and for a God who is a tyrant we might have a God who is a father; that for cruelty there might be kindness, for lust purity, for oppression liberty, and that to all men and all times divine forgiveness might be free for the penitent, divine comfort for the sad, divine strength for the weak, and the kingdom of divine righteousness for the pure in heart.

Now the really great souls have never failed to read the lesson of these facts, and they have never ceased to feel the sense of moral debt. The messengers of the cross who, like Paul, have sailed across unknown seas and penetrated to the heart of unknown countries that they might share their heart treasures, have felt themselves driven forward in the face of every sort of hardship and peril by this sense of moral debt. Great reformers like Wilberforce, Garrison, Phillips, Sumner and Brown, who confronted furious slave drivers and endured every form of insult and abuse that they might deal a death blow to

the iniquitous traffic in human flesh, great philanthropists like John Howard who went into the prisons of Europe when they were veritable pest houses in order that he might cleanse them from disease and wipe from justice a polluting stain, and the high souled women like Mary Ware, Frances E. Willard, Clara Barton, and Lady Henry Somerset who have led the crusade for the new womanhood and who have given a new sanctity to womankind throughout the world were inspired and strengthened and held to their God-appointed tasks by the sense of moral debt.

Something of what these great hearts have felt we also ought to feel. A huge account is laid up against us as well. All that makes life worth living, our material comforts, our liberties, our freedom to think, speak, and act, our intellectual ideals and culture, our religious faith and hopes all represent a tremendous debt, and if we have any real nobility within us we shall want to make some return, we shall take account of the fact that these precious benefactions are not simply for ourselves, but for the future, and we are in duty bound to pass them on, not merely as we have received them, but with the added increment that we should contribute as well. The thought of squandering these price-

less gifts upon ourselves, of using them to take advantage of others' weakness, or to profit by their loss will be increasingly abhorrent through the years.

From all this emerges the question as to the form that our contribution should take. The chief lesson for us to grasp at this point is that the quality of our service depends upon the quality of our life. The worth of our contribution will be conditioned by our character. There is an old axiom which declares that doing follows being and is according to being, and there is no truth that is more clearly attested by the whole history of man. It was the character of Jesus more than any work that he wrought, and the character of Paul more than the voyages he made, that have been through the centuries such an inspiration, and such a valuable possession of man. It has been said of a distinguished teacher that because of his own goodness he made goodness easier for other people. That is the only adequate return that we can make, it is the only return that measures up to the demand upon us. The type of goodness that has been the scoff of strong men will not answer, and the type of goodness that is merely respectable and not sacrificing, that is negative in quality and counts itself good simply because it is not bad,

will not answer. The sanctity of the young man of the New Testament, who came to the Master, saying to him,—“What shall I do to enter into the kingdom of God,” was of this character; when Jesus put him to the test he was found wanting; when he was asked to sacrifice he went away sorrowfully. Nothing but a righteousness of the self-sacrificing and self-giving type will measure up to the account that is laid up against us.

What every department of life is crying for and what the world needs most is the kind of individual consecration that is best described by the word “Christliness.” It is when the quality of individual character declines that social conditions become intolerable. For the past decade or more, under the leadership of a few brave souls the nation has been making a desperate effort to bring rapacity, selfishness, and greed under the restraint of law and to keep the ways of freedom open to the many as well as to the few, and the lesson that has been impressed anew upon us is that law of itself can accomplish little. The trouble is that it cannot reach the inner motives. “What is needed at the present moment, is not so much a better system of laws, or a better economic or social order, it is a better

morality, and a higher type of individual consecration and character.”*

“The supreme directness, the triumphant simplicity of Jesus as the restorer of humanity to its true order and the bringer of a new kingdom into the world, came from the clearness with which he saw that the world’s chief trouble and man’s deepest need lie in the inner life. He wasted no strength in polishing the outside of the cups and platters on which man’s exterior wants are served. He spent no time in whitening sepulchers. He knew that the seat of real goodness and permanent happiness and divine harmony must be in the inner life. There can be no real empire of peace unless this deepest region is reached. There must be no nook or corner or crevice of man’s life left unexplored, unsubdued, unreconciled, no lurking place of rebellion, no fountain of discord, no

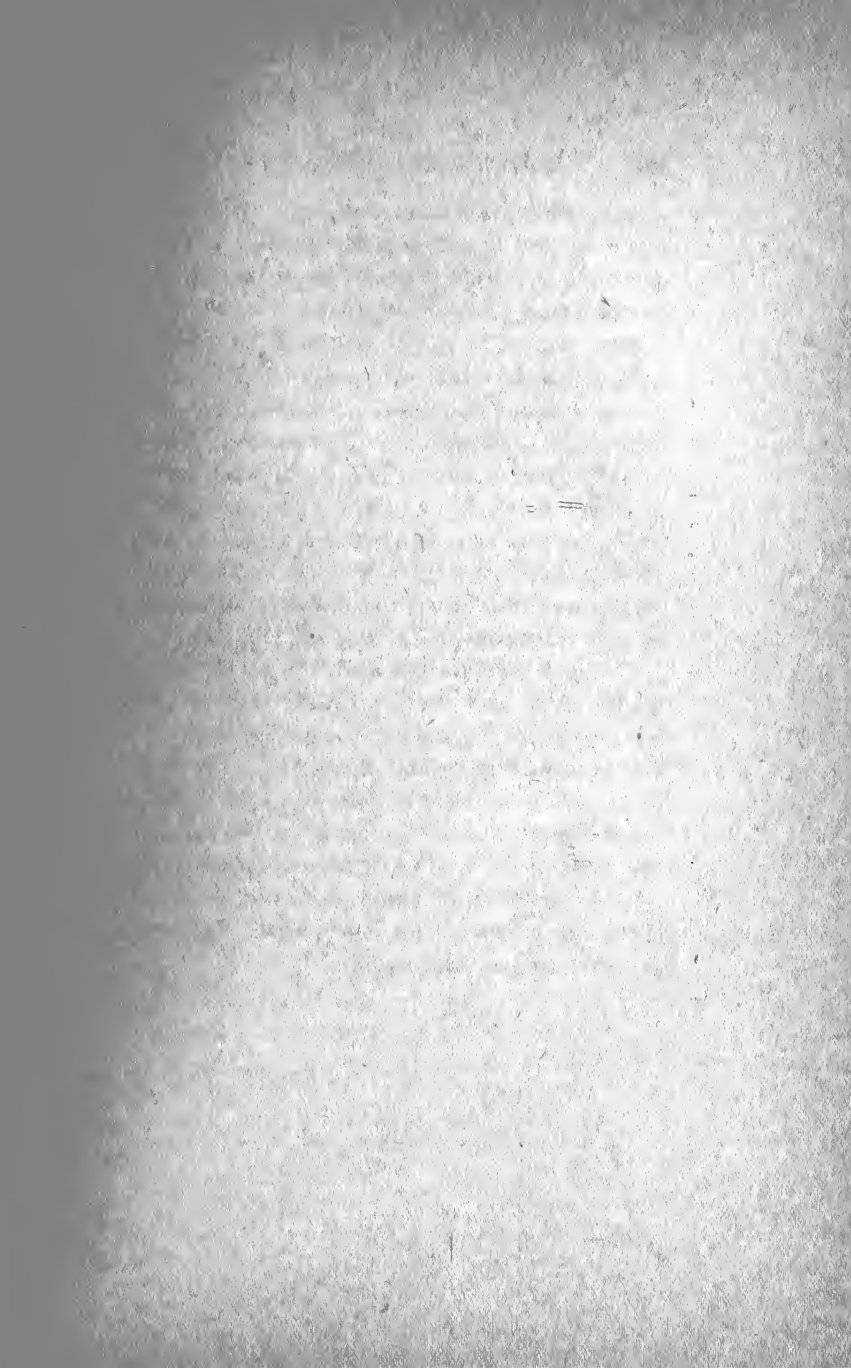
*“Little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.”*

The kingdom must go into the center and down to the bottom of personality and work from within outward, and from below upward.”†

* Washington Gladden. † Henry Van Dyke.

Such being the case the only adequate contribution that we can make, the only return that measures up to the demand upon us is that of a worthy character. Failure at this point spells failure for society. It means to squander the priceless gifts that have come to us so richly stored with the life blood of our fellows. For us to live in selfishness, notwithstanding the cross of Jesus, and in spite of all those who have died in order to win for us the life of love, and service, is to render null and void as far as we are able all this high-souled devotion of the centuries, to squander our priceless treasures, and to prove ourselves everlastingly unworthy.

"Materialism, barren well-being, the idolatry of the flesh and the I, of the temporal and of mammon, are these to be the goal of our efforts? I do not believe it," cries Amiel. "The ideal of humanity is something different and higher. A republic of souls will arise in which far beyond the region of mere right and sordid utility, beauty, devotion, holiness, heroism, enthusiasm, the extraordinary and the infinite shall have a worship and an abiding city."



And if ye love them that love you what thank have ye?—JESUS.

A loving heart exhales sweet odors like an alabaster box. It pours forth joy like a sweet harp. It flashes beauty like casket gems. It cheers like a winter's fire. It carries sweet stimulus like returning sunshine.—NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SYMPATHY THAT PERFECTS LIFE.

THERE is nothing that offers such a challenge to Christian devotion as the narrowness of the human spirit. The idea of regarding the entire human family as the subject of friendly concern, as essentially one with ourselves, and that independently of race, class, sect, or creed, is one that advances slowly, although it unquestionably does advance. Only the greatest souls like Confucius, Guatama, and Jesus have caught this idea and been swayed by it. For the most part it has been absent from the ordinary brain. Even the most cultured thinkers of Antiquity simply could not conceive of a state of society in which there are no aliens, or outsiders. With perfect complacency, both the political and religious writers of the ancient world base their ideal state upon slavery, and "the principle that it is not contrary to nature or the laws of God to despoil him whom it is a virtue to despoil goes unchallenged."

It must be admitted that for century after

century the ideals of Christendom did not seem in this respect to improve greatly. The exclusiveness of the pagan world was recast in the Christian doctrine of election, and was carried into Christian theories and conceptions of government. Augustine's "City of God" is a virtual denial of human solidarity, because it is based upon the idea that there are two kinds of men, the elect and the nonelect, the blessed and the cursed. At the Reformation, and for centuries after Catholics and Protestants hated each other, and thought of each other as reprobates both in this life and in the life to come, and the dismal story of Christian intolerance as manifested in the bloody ferocities of the Crusaders, in the rancorous hate that was poured upon the Moslems, in the bloody reprisals extorted by the Christian powers of Europe from the Jews, in the barbarities of the Inquisition, and in many other ways goes to show how the separation of the ancient world was carried into Christian modes of thought, and found recrudescence in the spirit and practices of Christian peoples.

Notwithstanding the manifest enlargements of spirit which have taken place in our own day, and in spite of the fact that "the brain of humanity has risen to the height of an entirely new view and is conscious of a fresh inner sense,"

the sense of human oneness, there is still much of the old restriction that survives to contradict, and to nullify what was most characteristic in the spirit of Jesus. The instinct that expressed itself in the brutal impulse to attack, to injure, and even to destroy the representatives of other points of view and other faiths has all but vanished from the Christian mind, but the attitude which has taken its place, however encouraging it may be to those who believe that the essential unity and brotherhood of the race must eventually prove itself, is hardly such as can be described in terms of the mind of Christ. Active persecution in the form of bodily injury is no longer possible in Christian lands, but all too often the spirit of isolation, self-withdrawal, and even cool contempt is left. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." That is a form of intolerance that is more subtle because less obvious, more courteous and more refined, but not less un-Christly than the other. It is the form that intolerance most frequently takes in an age like this, that prides itself upon its general culture, and intellectual breadth. The truth that needs to be driven home today is that active persecution is not the only contradiction of the mind of Christ. "Simply to be ignored

may be even more bitter, and rancorous than to be persecuted."

The extent to which the spirit of selfish and cruel separatism may exist in conjunction with an otherwise rational mind and a high standard of morality was indicated for all time in the matchless story of the wounded stranger, and the priest and Levite who came and looked and passed by on the other side. That the spirit of passing by on the other side, of looking with more or less contempt, of leaving others to their fate with scarcely a passing regret still survives to a marked extent in our own faith is scarcely open to doubt. That this spirit exists to a less extent than in other years is true enough, but that it should exist at all in the Christian faith of today is just ground for reproach.

The summons of the Christian faith is to a spirit that is without restrictions, and to a mental attitude that is uncircumscribed. In marked contrast to the limitations that fettered his own age and that has bound his followers is the mind of Jesus. "He had a view so broad, an insight so deep, a love so patient, so tolerant, so comprehending that he was able to see and to revere beneath all the aberrations of human nature the common soul of humanity, the imperishable seed of God."

From a background that was characterized by separateness and scorn of others the figure of Jesus emerged, wearing the stainless mantle of purity and peace. "There was no trace of contemporary bitterness upon him, no bounds of traditional narrowness to impede the freedom of his movements. It seems wonderful when we look upon him and contrast him with the time from which he sprang. He is like the light against the darkness, and like the radiant bow against the threatening clouds. He called himself the Son of Man, a designation that implies a wholly unrestricted attitude. He felt himself to be in and of the entire race. The nation, the family, the mother that bore him he acknowledged, and loved, but not in a sense that made of others aliens, or less the flesh of his flesh, and the bone of his bone. The large friendliness of his attitude was beautiful to look upon." He denied the right of sympathy to be exclusive. He protested against the protrusion of narrowness into love. "If ye love them which love you what thank have ye." Sympathy was to him a living warmth of soul that makes the whole world kin. He denied the right of worship to be exclusive. His disciples were commanded to look at life not merely in its personal aspect but rather in its collective. When they enter the

inner chamber to present themselves before the great searcher of hearts they are to remember their fellows. "After this manner therefore pray ye,—Our Father who art in heaven." They are to carry into worship a spirit that is wholly unrestricted. He denied even to grief the right to be selfish. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," said a would-be disciple, and Jesus answered, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." That was simply his way of asserting for all time the principle that social claims must supersede even private sorrows. His own conduct is the best illustration of the principle. In the tragic hour of Calvary when his heart was breaking with the sorrows of rejected love, he allowed his meditations to be interrupted thrice. Once it was in order to make provisions for the future comfort of his mother, once that he might answer the appeal to the dying malefactor by his side, and once that he might pray for his foreign murderers. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He loved in death as he had loved in life the world that lay outside of what men call true religion. Such was the sympathy of Jesus.

The secret of Christ's largeness was his apprehension of God as Father, whose love is like sunshine that falls with glad warmth, and equal

diffusion of light upon all his children, the evil and the good, the thankful and the unthankful, the worthy and the unworthy. With such a conception of God the notion of an elect race, a peculiar people, or favored classes and individuals became impossible for Jesus, and it becomes impossible for any man who has really caught the Master's vision of the Father, and has looked upon the world with his insight. "The conception of the Divine fatherhood is the grand leveler of ranks and heirarchies, it is the charter of fraternity, and the prophecy of peace and good will among men. When we say our Father whom do we include in the word? Nay, whom do we dare exclude? It sweeps us all in, it gathers into one waiting company the king and the beggar, the philosopher and the hind, the saint and the sinner. It confesses the parentage, and dignity and the worth of every human soul and cries in the simple words of Tiny Tim, "God bless us every one." What a word this is that reaches up so high and down so low and forth so far, the length and breadth and height of which we so feebly understand. If God is Father, men are brothers, and unbrotherliness, in any sphere or relationship is the real and deadly atheism of life."*

* Dr. Washington Gladden.

The apprehension of God as Father inevitably issues in sympathy. Those outside the charmed circle of race, family, or social class are seen to be human beings like ourselves, with needs which we are bound to consider, and claims which we are bound to respect. They have tastes, powers, and emotions like our own; they suffer and endure and have needs, and wherever there is need there is obligation. The one cannot exist without the other. Whatever evil force or influence that in a small or large way touches any life is a legitimate concern of ours. No man, who is a true man, can say of this or that evil, it does not concern me, and remain true. An evil that threatens or hinders any one is a concern of ours. The age old question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" has been answered forever in the affirmative, and those who have looked at the world through the eyes of Jesus, and with the sympathy of Jesus will never challenge the answer.

Sympathy lends vision, it enables us to see and to interpret other lives in their deep lying possibilities, and not merely in their artificial disparities. It enables us to separate the sinner from his sin. The sin remains abhorrent, but the man of Christly sympathy cannot hate or despise the sinner. There are two ways, as some one declares, of regarding human life. There

are the microscopic and the telescopic methods. Selfishness employs the former, it looks through a lighted lense and beholds all the weakness and the imperfection of men and it says, "This is humanity." So it is, but it is only one view, the narrow and contracted view. The truth is that we can never see our fellows aright or judge them as we ought until we take the larger view, the telescopic view. Men must be judged in relation to eternity as well as to time. "We cannot even judge a grain of sand aright, until we perceive it as one in substance with the starry worlds which whirl above us, we cannot judge a raindrop aright until we see it lifted into the clouds and woven into rainbows, and we cannot judge a human life aright until we see it underneath the stars, and in relation to the eternities," until we see it in the light of its possibilities and not merely in the light of its present limitations. Jesus revealed the larger view when he went into the hut of the fishermen in order to find Apostles for his faith. Who but the great Teacher with his far reaching vision would think of searching in the huts of fishermen to find apostles? He saw and measured the lives of these fishermen not simply in relation to the immediate and the present, but in relation to the future and the eternal.

Our own lives also are fulfilled by sympathy. It is the eagle wings by which the character is able to mount to its highest level. "No man liveth to himself." We are set down in the midst of other lives. They have need of us and we have need of them. It is one of the curious anomalies of history that men have repeatedly tried to serve God and to achieve goodness by repudiating social obligations, and fleeing from social relationships. The truth is that to accept these relationships, and to extend them as far as possible, and to enrich them with love and service, constitutes the supreme opportunity for the furtherance of character. "What health is to the body, what sweetness is to the lark's song, what perfume is to the rose, that is sympathy to culture and to character. Drunkenness and gluttony have not more power to blear the eyes than has cold indifference to degrade the soul and to warp the character. When the classic writer tells us that his hero escaped safely from an enchanted palace, only to suffer injury from his unfaithfulness to a friend he wishes us to know that it is easier to recover from the poison of Circe's cup than to escape the effects of disobedience to the laws of God." Sympathy is a law, and not merely a matter of caprice or impulse. It is a law of God that is universal.

'Just as summer fulfills all ripeness and growth for seed, and root, and tree, so it is that sympathy fulfills all laws for self, and man and the all loving God. It enriches and elevates everything that is truly admirable in life. Whatever is praiseworthy in courage, or endurance, whatever has firmness and sweetness, and nobility, whatever belongs to the hero and the patriot, whatever belongs to the seer and the scholar, all these are united and carried upward into the sweetness and purity of life by sympathy, until the perfect man seems to have been strengthened and inspired as with a presence.

*For this is the glory of love
And this the gracious power
Touching the tender heart
To leaf and flower.
Till not the flower alone
Beneath its radiant light,
But human lives as well
Grow pure and bright.*

Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.—PAUL.

When the Church reaches once more the temper of the first disciples; when it offers to men what the first believers offered its great monument will have come again. It has centuries of lost time to make up. It has to retrace long leagues of wandering in order to get back to the track. We need not trouble about the revelation of truth. That is streaming in upon us from all quarters. What we want is to enter again into the gospel's open secret.—MR. BRIERLEY.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SYMPATHY AND OF UPWARD STRIVING.

THE question as to what is the matter with the Church is all important. That it commands a widespread interest is shown by the fact that the editor of a popular magazine has thought fit, within a month or two, to bring forward a symposium upon the subject. The contributors are leading churchmen who represent nearly all the more important branches of the Church. They are a unit in thinking that there is something amiss with the Church, but they are by no means agreed as to what it is, or as to the remedy that is to be applied. To one the chief trouble is the failure of many to realize their duty to the Church; to another it is the growth of organizations outside which entrench upon the prerogatives of the Church, and absorb the time and strength that ought to be given to the Church; to another it is lack of spirituality and aggressiveness; to another lack of ethical earnestness upon the part of the Church; to another the

Church's lack of interest in vital issues, and to still another the Church's loss of touch with the needy and the helpless.

In point of fact are these not symptoms rather than causes? Is not the prevailing tendency to look at this problem from too small an angle? In much of the current discussion of the subject there is evident failure to realize that the question, what is the matter with the Church? is one that involves its ideal and its history from the time of its inception. At the root of the Church's present difficulties is its ideal, its conception of itself and its functions that it has assiduously cultivated for centuries. What did Jesus have in mind for his Church? What direction did he give it? How in the light of Christ should the Church define itself? What ends should it seek to realize? By what test should it condition its fellowship? These are considerations which simply cannot be ignored in any satisfactory effort to deal with the present problem of the Church. When we have come to understand what Christ really desired, and have sufficient experience of the joy of his service to be willing to make the sacrifice that he demanded, then shall we discover the real difficulty with the Church and where the true remedy lies.

It is true that the question as to how Christ thought of the Church, and how his immediate disciples conceived it is not by any means new. The minds of Christian people for century after century have turned backward to the early church with a kind of helpless yearning. It has been felt that the early Christians possessed a secret that was somehow lost to succeeding generations, but the interest for the most part has been of a sectarian nature, to gain support for some polity, dogma, or traditional usage. To all such questions the history of the early Church vouchsafes but a meager reply, or it answers in a tone which clearly shows that such considerations were deemed of but secondary importance. It is neither from the standpoint of the dogmatist nor the traditionalist that we can rightly interpret the early Church or enter into its secret, but only from the standpoint of an impartial and sympathetic inquiry.

Such inquiry, in the judgment of the writer, makes it clear that Jesus organized his disciples as a school of helpers, as a brotherhood of a new life, as a fellowship of sympathy and of upward striving. One who looks carefully at the early Church cannot fail to see that its idea of itself differed profoundly from that which came to be cherished in later centuries. It was a guild of

sympathy, the aim of which was to spread a new kind of life, rather than to organize and to extend an institution. It was the "warm heart, the gentle tongue, the ministering hand" that were the true test and badge of fellowship in the early Church, rather than subscription to a creed. In fact, there was no doctrinal test at all as a condition of fellowship, and there was no moral test except the evidence of a new spirit of life. Those who were weak in the faith were received gladly, with the confidence that their new spirit, and point of view would eventually issue in Christ-like conduct. The early disciples met together in affectionate family groups, and when they broke bread in remembrance of Christ it was of the nature of a simple family meal, and nothing that resembled the elaborate and artificial administration of the sacrament to-day. The disciples spoke of themselves as having been made alive in Christ, as having become new creatures, and they felt themselves bound to one another by a new spiritual kinship that was stronger than ties of blood. Their method of imparting their faith was that of personal contact on the part of the entire body, more than through formal preaching, by a few individuals who had been specially set apart. Their worship was of the most simple character. Such rites as they ob-

served were both simple and natural. Such Church officials as they had were not sharply distinguished from the rest of the brethren. The early Church was preeminently a fellowship of sympathy and of upward striving, and its success was unquestionably one of the most wonderful things of history. The life of this community of believers represented something that swept them forward in spite of themselves, and made them a conquering body.

But this early simplicity did not long continue. By the end of the first century it had begun to disappear, and two centuries later instead of the simple fraternal idea of the Christian body we find the institutional idea fully developed. "The upper room, where the family group had broken bread together, had become the gorgeous Basilica, the elder had become the pontiff, the simple communion meal had become a sacramental function. Instead of the little companies bound together in affection, we find the great congregations strangers to one another, instead of disciples it now embraces the population of the empire from Cæsar down. Instead of a band of brethren sharing their possessions with one another, we have a Church with imperial endowments. It has a hierarchy, liturgies, canons, creeds, disciplines, machinery for propagandism,

and diplomacy. In a word the society which passed out of sight a spiritual brotherhood reappeared a religious empire.”*

This conception of the Church as an institution based upon a dogmatic foundation, in which the creed, the ritual and the ecclesiastic hold sway, and which is to be expanded until it becomes universal, rather than as a brotherhood of a new life, a voluntary fellowship of sympathy and of upward striving, has in various forms persisted until the present. While more in evidence in the Catholic branches of the Church, it has also been shared to a very considerable extent by the various Protestant sects. They have all had for their aim to organize and to expand an institution, rather than to further a new spirit of life. Sectarian machinery has been extended and reduplicated until it is hard to imagine a state of ingenuousness that is greater than that which has come to pass. “Congregations are exhorted weekly to labor and give in order to carry the gospel to those who are in need, and not infrequently their gifts are used to plant a church in some community where the gospel has been preached for years, and where the Churches are already crowding each other.” People have been exhorted to denominational zeal rather than to

* Dr. S. D. McConnell.

sympathy and brotherhood, and the habit of reckoning success by numbers has been developed until it has become thoroughly fastened upon existing Church organizations.

When the history of the Church from the age of Constantine is taken account of, and we reflect upon how the Church in all this period that covers more than fifteen centuries has subordinated life to dogma, brotherhood to the organization and extension of an institution, fellowship and sympathy to sectarian zeal and loyalty, we cease to wonder that multitudes of earnest and devoted people to-day are profoundly dissatisfied with the situation. "Their quarrel," as one writer finds it, "is not with this Church or that one. They hold aloof from them all. But they are a kind of men which Christianity has produced. They hold Christ in unfeigned reverence." They may not care much for the definition of him which the Churches set forth in their creeds. They may not even attempt to define him for themselves, but they possess the same kind of spirit that was in Christ, and to a very marked degree, but they have no use for the Church.

The claim is put forth by a distinguished Roman Catholic prelate that as yet there is no reason to complain of the attitude of Catholic

people toward the Church. He points out that in the cities the Catholic Churches are crowded at each of the five or six masses offered on Sunday. In the rural districts, in good weather and in bad, Catholics seldom find any difficulty so great, or condition so intolerable as to have to dispense with the obligatory attendance at the divine service on Sunday. Nevertheless the careful observer does not find that conditions among Catholic peoples are as serene and undisturbed as these words would seem to indicate. In those countries where the authority of Rome is most in evidence there is revolt to-day in the hearts of multitudes. There is refusal to yield the submission that Rome demands. There is a Modernist movement within the Catholic Church that threatens to reform or to rend it. The attitude of passive submission which has hitherto prevailed among certain classes in reference to the Roman communion is clearly changing to-day into active impatience and hostility.

In Protestant communities the movement of reaction against the Church has proceeded further because there is a greater sense of freedom and independence, and because the Church organizations have far less ability to command. The place of influence that they once occupied has to a very considerable extent been lost. Their

call to worship appears to be heeded less and less. The methods hitherto relied upon to fill the Churches are now proving ineffective, and an ever increasing number of people who have been counted with the Churches are quietly dropping away, not so much that they have become hostile, as that they have lost interest. All things considered, the present is clearly a time of stress and strain and humiliation, at least for the Protestant branch of the Church. Meanwhile a multitude of people instead of heeding the call to worship, are running in breathless haste after strange cults that dazzle the eyes of both intelligent and ignorant with promises of mysterious cures, and marvelous wisdom. Organizations of many kinds that pretend to stand for fraternity and sympathy are thriving and spring up. The idea of service appears to have taken strong hold on the public mind. Vast sums are devoted to fraternal objects. The parable of the good Samaritan has become more real in the social life than in any previous generation. Benevolent agencies and institutions flourish, but the Church is neglected by an ever increasing number. It is said that in one of our American cities a new Y. M. C. A. building, three stories high, has recently been erected in the same block in which a Church building stands with the doors nailed

fast. In another city a splendid Church building, erected at a great cost, and now virtually abandoned, is allowed to go to rack while at the distance of a stone's throw is a magnificent hospital, amply supported by voluntary subscriptions and with all of its wards almost constantly occupied. These are but acute illustrations of a situation that widely prevails.

The remedy for this situation is "for the Church to trace back her stumbling steps to the place where the path forked and to start anew, to start along a better way." It is in other words to re-define itself, to put itself in line again with the evident intention of its founder, to make itself what it was in the beginning when it spread with such amazing rapidity, exhibited such a unique life, was so sure of itself, moved toward its purpose with such a wonderful courage, arrested and held the attention of men in such a way as to compel the conviction that the Church possessed a secret that they did not have.

The first step in this direction is to get rid of dogmatic restrictions and to leave it to Christ to establish his ascendancy over men in his own way, "by the power of what he is, and of what he has done, and not seek to secure that ascendancy beforehand by the imposition of chains of

our own forging.”* Surely, the Christ has a right to establish his ascendancy over the minds of men in his own way. But has the Church allowed him to do so? Is it not clear that the dogmatic fences with which the Churches have been hedged about and protected have been restrictions which have been imposed upon the Christ himself? They have operated to shut him out of the Church, because they have shut out a great many sincere possessors of his spirit. What a curious and anomalous situation, that in surrounding the Church with dogmatic barriers in order to protect it, the Master himself has been shut out.

The Church must be reorganized upon a radically different basis from that which for fifteen centuries it has recognized. Instead of a tight ecclesiastical fraternity erected upon a dogmatic foundation it must be converted into “a brotherhood of a new life,” into a fellowship of sympathy and of upward striving. It is perhaps true that many branches of the Church will not do this except as a last resort, since the habit of centuries can not easily and readily be overcome. There are indications from many quarters that the Church will be forced eventually to take this attitude, and when it is taken, the hard problem

* Prof. James Denny.

of Christian unity that has been confronting the churches for centuries will have been mastered. *Sympathy is constructive and unifying.* It draws the souls of men together. Sectarian divisions cannot long continue when the Churches have become re-established upon a basis of sympathy, when they stand preeminently for brotherhood and service rather than for dogma. It is not meant of course that Christian beliefs are unimportant, but that our beliefs must be put into character, into our deeds of kindness, into our devotion and service, and when that is done there will be no room for arguing. Our dogmas that cannot be expressed in these ways may well be left out and be regarded as unimportant. "I am sick of opinions," said John Wesley, "my soul loathes the frothy food. Give me solid substantial religion, give me a humble, gentle lover of God and man, a man full of mercy and good faith, a man laying himself out in work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love." That, it seems to me, is the basis upon which the Church of the future will stand if it stands at all. Its life will be found not so much in its verbal affirmations, as in the atmosphere it generates, the institutions it develops, and the character it creates.

It is not surprising that the first steps toward

the recognition of such a principle should be hesitating and uncertain. The creed has so long held sway that the very thought of another basis seems alarming. Churches which have inherited complex and elaborate creeds are apt to think that it is in their complexity and elaborateness that the difficulty lies, and hence the movement in so many Churches that looks toward reduction and simplification. In fact it is not merely the simplification of the dogmatic ideal as a basis of Church life that is needed, but the absolute surrender of it. Let it be remembered that the Church began without the creeds, and it has no more need of them now than it had in the beginning.

Many churches have already taken a long stride in this direction. "They are inviting into their fellowship all honest believers in goodness and togetherness who find in the historic Jesus so perfect a manifestation of these principles that they are willing to confess him as their spiritual master. This is a far cry from the theological inquisition that used to be the test of Church membership, and it conserves the religious essentials at which the doctrine-loving forefathers were aiming." Better still, it is in absolute consonance with Christ's significant parable of the last judgment, and it seems not unlikely

that we have reached a point where the movement in this direction will begin to spread with great rapidity.

For such a Church many earnest souls are waiting. Good men do not stand aloof from the organization as it now is because it is too religious, but because it is not religious enough. They see it uncertain and hesitating in its message, concerning itself with what seems unreal and paltry, weakened by its divisions and rivalries, and they cannot fully respect it. Many who are now without the Church would greet with ardor a Church life that offered them the new and abiding life in Christ, that took no thought for itself, that dared to stand squarely and firmly upon the principle of Jesus, "he that loseth his life shall find it," and that without pretense or equivocation was a fellowship of sympathy and of upward striving.

THE END.

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